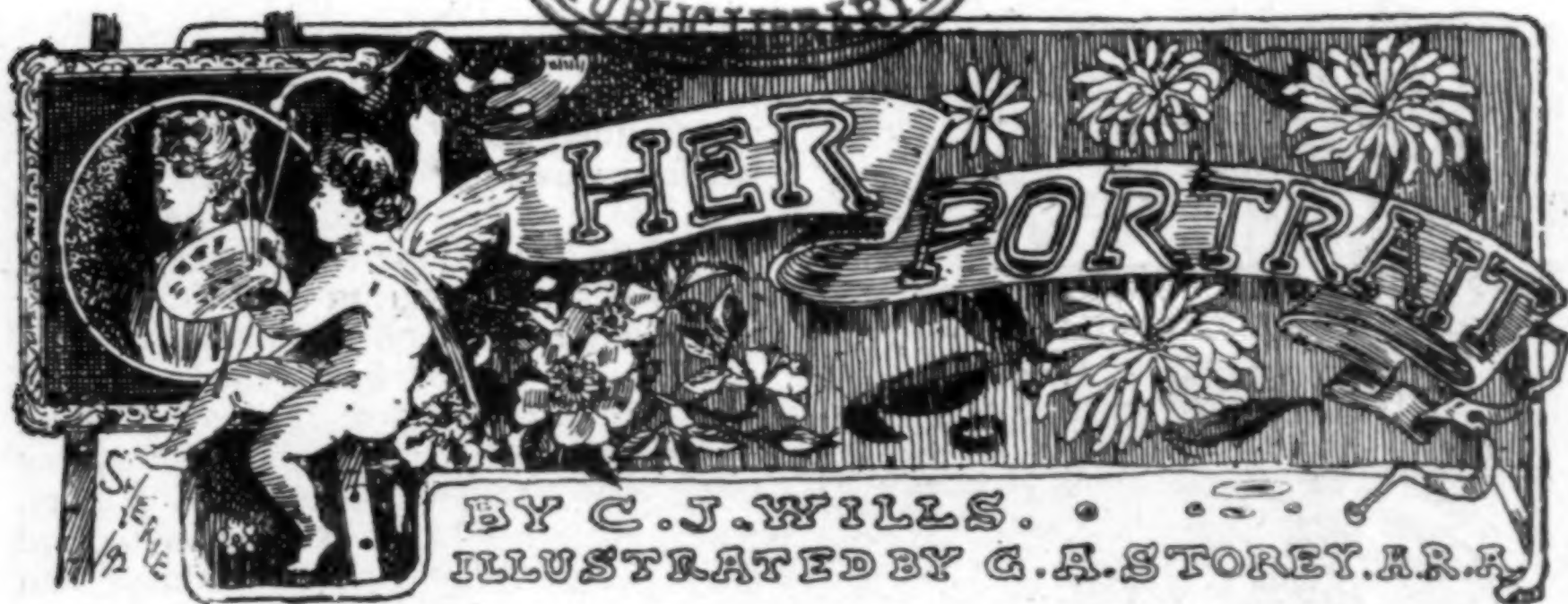






"HER PORTRAIT." - BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.



CHAPTER I.

"THE WIDOW AND THE ORPHANS."



"POPS, you'll be out of the window. You musn't do it, Pops, you really musn't," pleaded little Ethel Fane to her younger sister Dorothy, as that young lady leaned out of the window to inhale the sweet odours of the lanky plants of mignonette which grew in the little green window-box of painted deal, on the second floor front of a house in Lower Calthorpe Street.

Ethel was in charge, you see; and any one in charge of Pops always found his or her hands remarkably full. Not that Pops was more wicked or vicious than other little girls of eight; but Pops had been used to the long country rambles, and to romping in a big garden. Time had been, not three years ago, when Miss Dorothy Fane had, figuratively speaking, worn purple and fine linen; and I have seen a portrait of Pops in a little mob-cap,

which hardly flattered her, and to my eyes was picturesque and charming in the highest degree.

"I can't help it, dear, I do love the flowers so, Ethel; and they're the only flowers we have. No one seems to care for flowers here—and, Oh! Ethel, it's almost bed-time; and I'll be careful, indeed I will, and I'll hold tight, quite tight, to the window-ledge."

Then the arm of the elder sister was thrown lovingly round the child's waist, and the two kissed each other. But little Ethel Fane didn't smile, as a child should, when she kissed her little sister; big tears of sorrow stood in her eyes—for she was old enough to appreciate the poverty which reigned in the little household, and the constant struggle to keep the ever-present wolf from the door. Ethel Fane had grown wise, poor child, at ten. It's a hard thing for a young lady of ten, when she becomes a Cinderella and has to "help in the house" and run errands. Well, there is no disguising it, little Ethel's once dainty fingers were growing red and coarse—I don't say they would, but they might have been as white and shapely as yours, my lady—if—if only she hadn't had to gain her living honestly by the blacking of grates, etc., and sheer hard work; perhaps, like suffering, coarse-handedness is the badge of all their tribe—it's how you look at it, whether or no you think honest hard work a crime. And as she looked at her fingers, she saw the fact, and it didn't make her merrier or less thoughtful.



PHILLIDA FANE.

There was an old-fashioned brass bird-cage hanging above the children's heads, and in it an asthmatic old canary was labouring out his evening, struggling with the high notes like a tenor who ought to have retired and taken his farewell benefit long ago. Dicky

didn't feel the reverse of fortune that had fallen upon his little mistress. The wires of his home were bright; his seed, and sand, and water never failed him; he was growing old, that is all, and he bore it philosophically enough, and strange to say he hadn't the least idea that his voice wasn't what it was.

Stuffy is the only word for it; at the end of July most of the smaller London houses are stuffy. London lodgings have a bad name in the matter of stuffiness; people from the country don't understand them, and have to be acclimatized, and they go back to their homes, and their bed-rooms scented with lavender, and—well, they give London lodgings a bad name. But being July, it must be confessed that the second floor in Calthorpe Street, which Mrs. Fane rented for fifteen shillings a week, was stuffy. And the furniture didn't tend to raise Mrs. Fane's spirits.

"Bed-time, Pops," cried Mrs. Fane's eldest daughter, Phillida, as she entered the dingy little sitting-room. She was very young, just "sweet" seventeen, and her face was bright with wreathed smiles and looks of love; and, as she smiled, dear little dimples went and came, chasing each other, disappearing only to reappear again, like bubbles on a wimpling stream. And as she smiled, her arched and rosy upper lip disclosed a double row of white and well-matched pearls, and her glossy locks were smoothly bound in a fillet, which made her look like Diadumene, and gave the girl an air of staidness and dignity beyond her years; but little rebellious locks peeped out over the low, white wide forehead, below which sparkled a pair of big brown eyes full of girlish mirth, loving lustrous eyes, soft, innocent and beautiful, as the eyes of a young girl who has yet to learn that she has a heart should be. But Phillida's dress was of coarse black stuff, and I have to confess it was an ill-cut garment made at home, and a *first* effort. Well, some of us know what a first effort at home-made dress-making is like, I needn't say more—it was a dreadful garment, there was no denying the fact, and poor Phillida wore it, *because she had to*. That coarse black dress, too, was not improved by being worn threadbare; still we must remember that when one looked at Phillida, one forgot all about the dress, because she was so very pretty, a trifle pale perhaps, but then Lower Calthorpe Street at the end of July is not perhaps the most fitting place for a growing girl. And yet, somehow, though the black stuff dress was not becoming and was worn to the bone, yet it couldn't altogether hide the willowy lissome figure of the girl; it is nearly as hard to destroy all the effect of a pretty figure as it is to disguise an ungraceful one; and that, as we know, is an art, an art which has its grand *arcana*; its failures, and its triumphs. There is a secret charm in a pretty girlish figure only an artist can depict, or perhaps a poet, plain prose, or even fancy prose, can't do justice to the line of beauty; this leads us to the consoling reflection that painters and poets are of some use after all.

Perhaps it was because she was very fond of her sister Phillida, perhaps it was because she looked upon her as a second mother—and it's so easy for a little girl to look on a pretty sister as a second mother,

if the pretty sister be nice as well as pretty—that Pops forgot all about the lank mignonettes, and leaving the window-box, ran into her sister's arms, not even pausing to show cause against the fact that it was time to go to bed.

Phillida Fane caught her little sister up, and smothering her with kisses, carried her off; and doubtless, in a few minutes, Pops

they were dull folks perhaps, but eminently respectable. John Fane differed in no way from the rest of his family. He was a fine big man, fond of his wife, fond of his children, fond of Fane's Court, and of the land on which he had been born; and above all things, fond of his ease. He had married young, for love. Why shouldn't he have done so? He had



A PORTRAIT OF POPS.

was far enough from Calthorpe Street and wandering in the golden land—the golden land of fancy, the happy world of dreams.

The Fanes were gentlefolk. John Fane and his fathers before him had lived at the old manor house of Fane's Court, time out of mind. The Fanes were quiet people, they rubbed along, and if they made no figure in the county, they had no enemies;

inherited Fane's Court, and the place was entailed to heirs male. John Fane had but one trouble in life, he had no son. He never ceased to hope for one though, and he made no provision for his wife and her three girls; he might have insured his life—he didn't; he might have saved money—it never occurred to him to do so; the man lived up to his income, and he

forgot, it's the only word, to provide for those who were dear—aye, very dear—to him. Not a fool, not a wicked selfish fool—merely a careless, easy-going young man who let things slide; there are a good many such easy-going people in this weary wicked world, particularly among the class to which John Fane belonged, the class which doesn't have to work for a livelihood.

John Fane died suddenly, and a distant relation took possession of Fane's Court. Debts were paid, and when Mrs. Fane left for London, the sum of three hundred pounds stood between the widow and the workhouse. Her friends gave Mrs. Fane lots of good advice, they didn't offer her anything else lest they should hurt her feelings; and for two years Mrs. Fane had been wrestling with poverty in Lower Calthorpe Street.

The two younger children had retired, the asthmatic canary had tucked his head under his wing, and Mrs. Fane and Phillida sat at the open window. The widow's hands were crossed upon her lap, she sat upright in her chair, but her lip trembled with suppressed emotion; neither had spoken for some minutes.

"Phillis," said Mrs. Fane, at length breaking the silence, "I've got to tell you, Phillis, I've tried to keep it from you, dear, as long as I could, but oh, Phillis, we have no money left. What shall we do, I cannot tell, and I *can't* write to Mr. Fane your cousin, and beg for money—I don't think I *could* do that, Phillis, if I were starving; and yet, something must be done, dear."

"For the children's sake, mother, you must forget your pride, and write to Mr. Fane," replied the girl firmly.

"Oh, if we could only earn some money, dear. I've tried, ah! how I've tried. And you are but a girl, Phillida, and your education has been neg-

lected, for girls have to learn so much now-a-days. Oh, if you only knew enough to get your living as a governess. But then there are the children, what is to become of them? Phillida, when I think of the two little ones, I tremble. Two years in London have swallowed up our little store of money and there's nothing left, my dear, but a few pounds. Oh, Phillida, it's hard on you, my dear, that I should have to talk to you about such things as these!"

"Mother," said the girl, and there was a look of determination on her face as she said the words, "I must get something to do. I'm young, I know, mother, but I can surely earn something, being so young I can learn. Beggars musn't be choosers, mother, we must pocket our pride."

Then there was a silence and Phillida stared out into the street, but there was nothing that gave her comfort in what she saw there; when a country girl has lived a couple of years in the great city, she knows only too well that the streets of London are not paved with gold.

"It was only a week or two before your poor father's death, my child, that we walked side by side along the peach walk, and tried to look things straight in

the face. He found it difficult to look things straight in the face, poor man. 'You needn't trouble about Phillida, dear,' he said,

'our little girl is a pretty girl, and she's as good as she's pretty,' those were his very words, dear. 'Phillis will marry, and she'll marry well, or I'm a Dutchman.'"

Phillida looked up at her mother, and then she blushed, poor child, and the blush became her.

"As long as I live, Alicia," said your father, 'it's all plain sailing;' then he began to talk of Ethel and the baby, for Pops



MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

was a mere toddling mite two years ago, and then he told me that he felt anxious about me, and about them, and—and—and that he thought that he was ailing. And then the matter dropped, Phillida, and nothing was decided. And now, Phillida, what is to be done? What will become of us? I don't know. Oh, Phillis, how shall we ever feed the children on our income of fifty pounds a year, which is Mr. Fane's bounty, his charity!"

"There are no good fairies now-a-days," replied Phillida hopelessly. As she spoke the words, there was a loud rat-tat at the door, which seemed to answer her, and the girl rose hurriedly, and leaving the room ran down to examine the letter-box.

"A letter, mother, a letter for you!" she cried triumphantly, holding the missive above her head. "Mother," said the girl hopefully, "perhaps it's good news."

"It's from Mr. Bayle," said Mrs. Fane simply, as she opened it.

Now Mr. Bayle was the family solicitor.

The letter ran as follows:

"47, Lincoln's Inn Field's.

"Dear Madam—You honoured me with your confidence on the decease of my respected client the late Mr. John Fane. At the time you were anxious to make some provision for your two younger children, both little girls. Should you still remain in the same mind, the opportunity now presents itself. Two vacancies have occurred in the Grey Cloak Girls' School at Edmondsbury. This ancient foundation was established for the reception of the daughters of poor gentlefolk. They are fed, clothed, and they

receive a good plain education, and, on leaving, are given the sum of fifty pounds (£50) as a start in life.

"I would most respectfully point out to you, dear Madam, that you should not lightly reject the opportunity that now offers itself, and I shall be delighted to give you further particulars if you will call on me here at your earliest convenience.

"There need be no feeling of delicacy on your part in accepting the presentations which have fallen in the ordinary course to a legal community to which I belong.

"I have the pleasure to be, dear Madam,

"Yours faithfully,
"EZRA BAYLE."

Mrs. Fane read the letter; as she finished it there were tears in her eyes, and without a word she passed it to her daughter.

Phyllida read the letter, and, flinging her arms round her mother's neck, she cried,

"Oh mother, dear, there *are* good fairies in the world now-a-days after all."

Mother and child sobbed silently on each other's necks. They shed tears,

poor things, but the tears they shed were not tears of sorrow, but happy tears of joy and gratitude.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. FANE'S ADVISER.

Mrs. Fane considered Mr. Bayle's letter very anxiously; she knew perfectly well that the old lawyer meant to befriend her, and she was quite certain that had he seen any degradation in her acceptance of his proposition, it would never have been made.



MRS. FANE.

The costume of the St. Edmondsbury girls went very much against the grain in Mrs. Fane's mind; the fact of its being becoming did not weigh much with her. The feeling was a natural one: how many people among the upper classes, I wonder, would be glad to send their boys to the Blue Coat School, if it wasn't for the costume, and the tell-tale yellow stockings? People who are snobs at heart, can't swallow those yellow stockings; to them, the apparition of their son Johnny in yellow stockings would be the open confession of impecuniosity; and most of us can carry the fox of poverty, though he may gnaw our vitals, as the Spartan boy did, under our cloaks, but we do like to keep the beast out of sight.

It is a great thing to have some one to confide in; it is a great comfort to tell one's woes; it is nice to be able to ask advice (particularly when one is not bound to take it). No one thinks it nice to have to ask the advice of a lawyer or a doctor, because we have to take it—and, worst of all, pay for it—and when we don't follow it, there are pains and penalties. Mrs. Fane could always command advice from a very old friend of her mother's. As a rule, Mrs. Fane had found Mrs. Barker's advice good, though it was often extremely unpalatable.

"I shall go to her at once," said Mrs. Fane to Phillida, "Adelaide is always right. She will tell me what I ought to do; she is a woman of the world; and, if I act on her advice, I shall have nothing to reproach myself with."

Mrs. Barker had lived in London all her life. She was the wife of a medical man, who was an enthusiast. Dr. Barker had been a distinguished student. Dr. Barker obtained a junior hospital appointment, and then Dr. Barker "hung on," and starved discreetly. "Hanging on," at a London hospital, is

the term used by medical men to express that period of the young physician's life which is passed upon the teaching staff of a great hospital in waiting for dead men's shoes. Dr. Barker did many hours' weary work in the Out Patient Room, at his hospital, for which he was paid the sum of twenty pounds a year as an *honorarium*. The doctor lectured for an hour a day three times a week, but the bulk of the fees paid for the course, went to the hospital. Those lectures of his were very genuine, and took up many hours of the doctor's time in anxious preparation. One of his courses had even been printed in that great medical journal *The Pestle*, and Dr. Barker had the privilege of correcting the proofs, and he got what the editor called a magnificent advertisement, nothing more. As for the doctor's private practice, it was under two hundred a year—and his neat, single-horse brougham cost him three-hundred and fifty; he lived in a house

which he rented at three hundred; and here Mrs. Barker had passed the whole of her married life, in doing her best to keep up appearances on a small income, and longing for the better days which were so long in coming.

When Bagley, the extra-professional professional man servant saw Mrs. Fane, he was about to show her into the dismal dining-room, but on her asking for Mrs. Barker, he ushered her up into the drawing-room with a sigh.

The two ladies shook hands warmly.

"I've come to have a long talk, Adelaide," said the younger. "I've come to worry you with my troubles, and I've come to ask your advice."

Mrs. Barker gave a little sigh of relief—after all she didn't want help, that was something; and Mrs. Barker wasn't a hard-hearted woman; she *had* to be uncharitable, because she had nothing to give away—that was all.



BAGLEY.



"MY DEAR, YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO HESITATE."

"Oh, Adelaide, I'm at my wits' ends; I don't know how to act, I don't indeed," said poor Mrs. Fane, as she sank into a chintz-covered chair. Then she proceeded to unfold her woes.

"My dear," said the elder lady, "you have no right to hesitate for a single moment. You say that the little ones will be properly fed, and well taught; that being the case, it's your duty to make the sacrifice. Yours is a small income, Mrs. Fane, you must endeavour to manage. I have to manage—and I have to put up with a great deal. There's Bagley. Bagley is a most valuable man. Bagley could get his sixty pounds a year any day, and if he went to a man in good practice, the shillings from the patients, who are always ready to pay for being seen out of their turn, would be as much again.

Bagley never would stay with us if I didn't manage him. So at four I let Bagley go out, and he is 'wine waiter' at a big restaurant after five. I don't like it, the doctor doesn't like it—we *have* to do it, my dear; and Bagley waits at our two state dinners as a personal favour to me. There, that is one of my skeletons. I've let you see the skeleton, because I think that practice is better than precept, my dear. You have had reverses, you cannot feed and clothe your two little girls. Here's Providence, in the shape of Mr. Bayle's offer. Providence is ready to feed and clothe your two youngsters. I wouldn't turn up my nose at Providence, if I were you, dear."

"But they're such little things, Adelaide," pleaded poor Mrs. Fane. "Pops is but a baby, and it's so hard to part with her, and there are no holidays, and I should be expected not to come and see them

too often I suppose—then there's the dress, and it's very dreadful to think of poor John's girls being charity children."

"Charity fiddlesticks," cried Mrs. Barker. "You may depend upon it that your girls will be far better off at St. Edmondsbury. Charlotte, you must look the matter straight in the face. Why, when that eldest girl of yours goes out, as she will have to, mind, you will irretrievably ruin the two other children if you attempt to teach them yourself, and if you didn't they would have to go to a Board School. Of course they must go to St. Edmondsbury. But how about Phillida, Charlotte? Can't that great girl of yours do anything?"

There was a moment's silence.

"Adelaide," said Mrs. Fane, "when

poor Mr. Fane died, Phillida was just fifteen. As you know very well, fifteen is the turning point in a girl's education; it is at fifteen that a girl needs expensive masters. Just then we were suddenly plunged into poverty, and had to take the little lodgings in Calthorpe Street, where we haven't a piano. And what with her household cares, and her making all our clothes, and her looking after Pops, and two years ago Pops was a mere baby and dreadfully troublesome, and her doing what she could in the teaching way with Ethel, poor Phillida has had her hands quite full; and, my dear, she has lost her music, she has forgotten her Italian altogether, and the little French she ever knew, for want of conversational practice is going the way of the Italian. But oh, Adelaide, her plain needle-work has improved wonderfully, and her button-holes are a sight for sore eyes."

"Ah," said Mrs. Barker, with a hollow groan, "I am sorry to hear it: yes," she continued, with a magisterial wave of her hand that effectually silenced Mrs. Fane, "I am very sorry to hear it. I am sorry, Charlotte, because your Phillida will have to get her own living, and from what you say, it seems that she will have to get it as a dressmaker. Has she no other accomplishments, Charlotte, beyond dress-making?"

"I am arraid she hasn't," said poor Mrs. Fane, in a melancholy tone. "Oh, yes, she does one thing beautifully," said the proud mother, brightening at the thought; "she makes and trims all our bonnets, and they are always successes, Adelaide."

"Oh," said Mrs. Barker, "then if we had the money to pay a premium, we might apprentice her to a milliner; fortunately, perhaps, for Phillida, we haven't the money."

"At one time, Phillida did think that she would like to learn shorthand."

"That might do," said Mrs. Barker, "if she were phenomenally ugly, but being pretty, it's impossible, my dear. The pretty ones are no good; most authors say that a good-looking amanuensis interferes with the flow of their ideas; they sit and stare at the amanuensis, and the more they stare the less work they do; and as you say Phillida is good-looking, it is not to be thought of. It is a very serious matter," said Mrs. Barker, meditatively. "Is she very pretty?"

"Everybody tells me she is; perhaps,

being my own child, I am partial; but still everybody says she's pretty—very pretty. And oh, Adelaide, she's as good as she's pretty; and she never complains, dear, though we are so dreadrully poor; and it must be terribly hard on Phillida, to think that her prospects once so bright, are blighted now, and that we have, so to say, gone under. The little ones don't understand it, of course, but Phillida had to be told; and she's a good girl is my little Phillis, and what we should have done without her, Adelaide, I'm sure I don't know."

"If she's good as well as pretty, Charlotte, there's a chance for her. It isn't much of a chance, and it's weary work so I've been told."

"Don't keep me in suspense, Adelaide. What is the opening, the chance you speak of?"

"You say she is very pretty," said Mrs. Barker; "when her face is a girl's only fortune, why shouldn't she utilise that pretty face of hers, and sit to artists as many good and honest girls have done and do still? "It is an opening in its way."

"Adelaide, you ought to be ashamed of yourself," cried the indignant mother.

"Don't be a fool, Charlotte," said Mrs. Barker drily. "Have you ever had your photograph taken?"

"Of course I have," said Mrs. Fane with a sigh of indignation, "what has that got to do with it?"

"Everything. It's weary work, isn't it, Charlotte, sitting for one's photograph; it's weary work having to try and look pleasant for only a few seconds. What would you think of having to try and look pleasant for several hours at a stretch? That's what sitting as a model means. I'm not suggesting that your little daughter should pose for the nude. I don't propose that she should be painted as Venus rising from the sea. But if your Phillida is as pretty as you say she is, with a little interest, which I happen to possess, there is no reason why she shouldn't earn a living, aye, and an honest living too, as an artist's model. It's weary work, Charlotte, but it's honest work. My father was an artist, as you know; realism was his strong point; he used to boast that he held the mirror up to nature. I shall never forget the unfortunate wretch who sat to him for Demosthenes. Demosthenes, you know, my dear, had an impediment in his speech, a stutter or something of that sort; he is

supposed to have cured himself of it by filling his mouth with pebbles. I saw an unhappy model sitting for Demosthenes to dear papa; the poor man had his mouth full of stones for a whole afternoon; he didn't complain, and he couldn't if he'd wanted to, poor wretch, because his mouth was full of stones. There's a great deal of professional pride among artists' models, though you wouldn't think it, Charlotte, and papa gave Demosthenes an extra twopence an hour on account of the stones.

Of course the poor fellow suffered torments; and he declared, though I never believed it, that he swallowed some; of course, papa had to buy him off. The picture was, luckily, a success, so it didn't much matter. There's nothing to be ashamed of in sitting to an artist; why, I have sat hundreds of times to papa."

Here Mrs. Fane made a deprecatory gesture.

"Don't wave your hand at me in that irritating way, Charlotte," continued Mrs. Barker, a little petulantly. "If you'll only put your pride in your pocket, I'll give you a letter to John Milner, who is my cousin, and your girl is as safe with him as

she would be with the Archbishop of Canterbury. People say that John Milner is rough and brutal, that merely means that he doesn't truckle, and he can be as kind and gentle as a woman, if he likes; and so your little girl will always find him. Why, if my cousin John would only truckle and koo-too to fashionable fools, and go into society, and grin and bear it, and pretend to like it, he'd make twice the income he does; and John earns a lot of money as it is," added Mrs. Barker proudly.

"Well, but Adelaide," replied poor Mrs. Fane, who was already beginning to waver, "of course I should have to

chaperon Phillida, and then there would be nobody to look after the house."

"You needn't trouble about that, dear," replied the elder lady, "it's a case of no admittance except on business in an artist's studio; the sisters and the cousins and the aunts, and the mothers too, are rigidly excluded."

"Then the thing isn't to be thought of for an instant," cried Mrs. Fane decidedly.

"Now, Charlotte, do be reasonable. Suppose for a moment that your mis-

fortunes had never happened, that you were still at Fane's Court, and that you had commissioned John Milner to paint a portrait of your daughter Phillida. Well, I suppose you would ask him to stay at Fane's Court as your guest. You wouldn't expect him to take his meals in the servants' hall, and you would be very glad to see him at your dinner-table, and you would feel quite safe, my dear, as to the spoons and forks."

"Why, of course I should, Adelaide."

"And when Phillida sat to him, you wouldn't feel it incumbent upon you to act as her duenna, because you would know that John Milner is an artist and a gentleman."

"Oh, but Adelaide, that's different; the mere fact of Mr. Milner's being a guest, alters the position altogether."

"No, my dear Charlotte. It is simply because you would look upon Mr. Milner as an artist and a gentleman. And let me tell you, my dear, that your true artist is invariably a gentleman. He may be eccentric, he may dress himself like Guy Fawkes, he may even wear a scarlet tie, because he can't help it, poor fellow, and a hat that makes him resemble an organ-grinder; he may even throw his h's about, or be absolutely uneducated; but yet, Charlotte, if he be a true artist, he is



John Milner

inevitably a gentleman. You know the old saw that art refines the manners of a man, and doesn't allow him to be a brute. As the doctor would say, it may take some time to act, but it's an infallible prescription in the long run. And just as you would feel that Phillida was perfectly safe because the artist was your guest, so you may rest assured that your Una would need no lion to guard her in an artist's studio, simply because, my dear, the girl who sits to an artist is *his guest*, and has, so to say, eaten his salt."

"It sounds plausible enough, Adelaide," said Mrs. Fane, "and of course it would be a great thing for Phillida, if she *could* earn something."

"I sha'n't try to persuade you any more, Charlotte," said Mrs. Barker. "I don't think you foolish enough or wicked enough to hesitate where your child's interests are concerned." And then she rose, and sitting down to her davenport, wrote a note, which she handed open to her friend.

It ran as follows:—

"Dear John—The bearer, Miss Fane, is the daughter of a very dear friend of mine; she would like to utilise her spare time.



WALTER CROFT.

Now as she is a very pretty girl, why shouldn't she sit to you; and if you could find her employment as a model, you would particularly please me, and do an act of charity that would greatly oblige

"Your affectionate cousin,

"ADELAIDE BARKER."

"Now go home, Charlotte," said Mrs. Barker, "and talk it over with Phillida; and if you're the sensible woman I take you to be, you won't hesitate, Charlotte, for an instant. The money your daughter will earn will be earned by honest hard work, of which she need never feel ashamed. And let me give you one hint—when you send her, for she should go alone, remember, make her as nice and neat as possible. First impressions, my dear, with men, even with artists, are everything, and as to beauty unadorned being adorned the most, I don't believe a word of it. Let her put on her best frock, Charlotte."

Then Mrs. Fane took her leave, having made up her mind to avail herself of the kind offer of Mr. Bayle, but determined to talk the other matter over with her daughter Phillida very seriously.

CHAPTER III.

MASTER AND PUPIL.

The studio of John Milner was not a place for the sale of pictures, but a workshop. Upon the walls were a heterogeneous collection of studies, engravings, and copies of the old masters, Dutch, Spanish and Italian, all of which had been produced by John Milner in the days of his youth. Perhaps the place was shamefully untidy; most of the casts which stood or hung about were covered with dust, the painting table lay open, on it was a mass of half-squeezed paint tubes and miscellaneous bottles of varnish and media, and seated upon a particularly uncomfortable looking chair, staring ferociously at a large canvas, was Mr. John Milner, the well-known artist.

John Milner was a particularly handsome man; he was generally known as Jupiter Milner, on account of his handsome and classical head. There was the big broad forehead—the front of Jove himself, over which the plenteous hair still curled naturally, a very crown of glory, though white as driven snow; the shaggy eyebrows were a deep iron grey, and shaded a pair of expressive eyes,

tender yet bright; eyes which could sparkle with humour, twinkle with fun, or blaze with indignation. Many women had declared, when John Milner had been a younger man, that his eyes had haunted them. Not that John Milner was in the least bit a lady's man; for, as he used to say, "I'm wedded to Art, you know, and she's an exacting mistress, and brooks no rival." The man's complexion was an honest, uncompromising red and white, which made him look the picture of health; the lips, too, were ruddy, and when he smiled, they disclosed a set of perfect teeth which, considering that the man was close on sixty, was a notable fact. The beard and moustache are best described when it is said those of the great Zeus at the Vatican might have been modelled from them; the leonine head was squarely set upon the massive shoulders; and John Milner, though you wouldn't have thought it, stood six feet two in his stockings, his massive big frame taking away a good deal of the appearance of height. Milner wore a loosely tied blue birdseye neckerchief, and an old grey suit of tweed considerably the worse for wear; he had on a pair of carpet slippers which, though not becoming foot coverings, were evidently comfortable ones.

There was a very pretty female face which appeared well nigh finished, and looked out from the canvas, which was smeared and smudged with various daubs of green and brown. The dress of the figure, which was a full length one, was merely indicated in a rude outline of colour upon the white priming of the canvas, and a little sketch in water colour was fastened to the stretcher by a drawing-pin.

A few feet off stood a less massive easel with a half-finished portrait on it, upon which a particularly good-looking youth was hard at work; he couldn't have been

more than one-and-twenty; he was well-dressed, his hands were white and delicate, he had an almost feminine complexion, a small moustache, which, like his short curly hair, was glossy black, and he was a very good-looking young gentleman indeed. He laid down his palette and his matel-stick, he took a silver cigarette case from his pocket, and taking a vesta from a matchbox attached to his watch chain, he lighted the cigarette; and as he smoked, he gazed intently at his half-finished work, and then he sighed.

"I can't get the mouth right, Boss," he said. "Mrs. Dacre insisted on smiling sweetly, in order to show her pretty teeth, I suppose. The fair widow is a woman who makes the most of her advantages; and in trying to do justice to her, I have produced an ogress who is showing her teeth. It isn't a smile, it's a grin—an ogress-like grin, and there is no other word for it. I wish I hadn't offered to do it. I suppose it was my vanity that made me let her talk me into it; but it has got to be finished, or else she'll quarrel with me; and if it doesn't do her justice, she will quarrel with me; and it's very difficult to do a handsome woman like old Dacre's widow justice. But I can't go on asking her to sit for me for ever, and why on earth she should have come to a beginner like me for her portrait, I'm sure I can't tell."

MRS. DACRE.

"I suppose she thought it was the easiest way of making a fool of you," said the elder man drily.

"Anyhow, Boss, she's an uncommonly pretty woman, and a fellow might do worse."

"Yes," grunted out Milner, "a fellow might do worse than marry a woman seven years his senior. You've plenty of money, Walter, but she'd soon help you to get rid



of it. I don't think Dacre left so very much behind him when he died ; and they do say that jealousy helped to kill him. You are not by any means the first man that woman's made a fool of, Master Walter ; and I should think myself that if there were nothing else against her, that seven years difference ought to choke you off. But you boys are all alike, and I suppose you will be a boy to the end of the chapter. Why, dear me, I was a boy myself once, and my first love was a tender flower of eight-and-thirty ; I was ten years old then, and that's fifty years ago. I think if I were you, Walter, I should make it a long engagement ; that would cure you if nothing else would."

"Well, a fellow must like somebody," remarked the young man impatiently.

"I suppose if you do make a fool of yourself with Mrs. Dacre, that you'll wash your hands of Art." Then Milner got up, and gazed critically upon his pupil's work. "You've hit the likeness, Walter," he said, "you have a happy knack of doing that ; and there is, as you say, something ogress-like about the mouth ; but the mouth's uncommonly like, my boy, all the same."

"I don't seem to get on, Boss," said Walter Croft wearily ; "it isn't laziness."

"You have talent, my boy," said Milner kindly, "and you've made immense progress since you came to me two years ago ; but I don't think you'll ever do any real good except at portraits. It isn't your fault, Walter, it's your misfortune. You are rich. You are—excuse the word, my boy—to a certain extent a swaggerer ; there is no royal road to fame, remember, and it's only by sheer hard work that a man can do any real good ; he may become the fashion, of course, and he may make money ; and people like to be flattered, and are willing to pay for it. You ought to have to *live* by Art, Walter, to do anything great in it ; and if you were as poor as a rat, it would do you lots of good, and take some of the side off you ; and if you hadn't had those two little things of yours hung last year, it would have been all the better for you, my boy."

"You are very rough on me, Boss," said Walter Croft, with an air of dejection, "you call a spade a spade, with a vengeance."

"I do so for your good, my boy," said the elder man kindly. "I don't think you will ever do any real good, Walter, because you let a parcel of women make a fool of

you. You used to work, you know, when you first came to me, and the glorious glamour of the thing was fresh upon you ; but you don't work now, my boy, though you honestly think you do. You drive over to Mrs. Dacre's place, and she tells you how clever you are, and how handsome you are, and you sit at your easel and play at painting her portrait, and you drink in her flattery with an eager ear. And then I suppose you make love to her, just to pass the time away. And then some of her fashionable friends drop in and tell you what a clever fellow you are, and what a good-looking fellow you are, just as she did."

"And then I suppose you think I make love to *them* ?"

"Well, no," said Milner ; "that would be bad form, you couldn't well do it before her face ; besides, you know, you're looked upon now as her lawful prey, just as though you were the cake in the nursery rhyme, which had to be pressed and patted and marked with a big D, and Mrs. Dacre will pop you in the oven, my boy, and marry you, before you're many weeks older."

"Oh, hang it, Boss, don't talk of marriage, the word has never even been mentioned between us, except on one occasion, when she said a little sentimentally to me, that marriage was the grave of love. 'I found it so, Walter,' she said a little sadly, and she looked as if she were going to cry."

"So she calls you Walter, does she ?" said the elder man drily. "Then she means business. When a woman who has cut her wisdom teeth calls a young fellow by his Christian name, my boy, she always means business."

"Oh, hang it, Boss, it isn't business, it's mere sentiment."

Then John Milner laughed aloud.

"Did you ever see any sentiment about a dealer, Walter ?"

"Well, no," said the young fellow, with a smile, "I can't say I have ; it isn't in their line."

"Well, it's my opinion," said Milner, "that there is more sentiment, far more sentiment, about a dealer, than there is about a young widow of expensive tastes, a very small balance at her banker's, and who has cut her wisdom teeth. I don't care for Circe, you know ; she was a widow, and unless I am much mistaken, she murdered her husband. To my mind sorceresses are very uncomfortable people."



JUPITER JOHN.

"You're rather rough on her, Boss," said the young man, flinging aside his cigarette impatiently. "This is a handsome woman, and a hospitable woman, and if she's good enough to take me by the hand and try to 'boom' me, it's merely because she's so good-natured and fond of Art."

"And the milk of human kindness, I suppose. If you weren't so well off, my son, I don't think she'd exhibit so much good-nature and fondness for Art. You are useful, you can take her to the play; you can drive with her, and ride with her, and you're nice-looking and wear good clothes, and—you're well off."

"You're very down on me to-day, Boss. Is it my fault that I am well off? and is it a crime to go to a good tailor? Must I be any the worse artist because I dress well, and like to enjoy myself?"

Milner smiled.

"An artist enjoys himself in his Art," he said; "he lives for it—in it, and is ready to die for it. With him everything is subservient to Art. Your true artist is his own severest critic, and the very best of his work never satisfies his aspirations."

"There is a good deal in that," said Walter Croft. "If being filled with the sense of his own unworthiness can help a fellow, I ought to get on; and when I

look at the ogress," he added, staring moodily at the portrait, "it makes me think that perhaps I never shall do any good. You won't turn me out, though, will you, Boss? You'll wait till my last year of pupilage is over; and then if I'm no good, you'll tell me so, and I can take to criticism and sit in judgment upon more successful men."

"Pooh, you're posing, Walter; I wish you wouldn't pose. What's a year or two of pupilage? The pupilage of an artist is his lifetime. I can teach you the things that you'd have had to muddle out for yourself—the tricks and dodges; and of course you'll copy my mannerisms, and admire my faults. There are lots of pretty women who want a cheap portrait; well, they'll come to you, because you'll do it cheap; or take payment in soft words and smiles, and little dinners. That's why women sit to amateurs, because it costs them nothing. It's the crowd of clever amateurs which has sprung up now-a-days, that is ruining English artists and English Art. Here in England you can get mediocrity very cheap, and because they pay little or nothing for it, English people have got to like mediocrity. Bravo!" cried Milner suddenly, "that's better; the ogress is disappearing, and the handsome woman showing up at last; she is a handsome woman, I suppose, though she's terribly artificial with her frills, her fallals, and her furbelows. Why can't you go to nature for your beauty, my

boy? Why must you be a delineator of decorative millinery? It isn't Art, you know; no, hang it, it isn't Art."

"It's all very well to talk, Boss," said Walter Croft; "but where am I to find real beauty in a model's face? I may be finical, but I like pretty surroundings, and the signs of wealth. Pluck off a cock-pheasant's handsome plumage, and where's his beauty then? There's a great deal in

clothes, Boss, particularly in women's clothes, though you may call them the adulteries of Art, which only strike the eye. It isn't every budding artist who is lucky enough to find his Fornarina and his inspiration at the beginning of his career. I look about in vain for my ideal, and I never see her save in my dreams; she haunts my memory as a lovely vision impossible to reproduce; vague and intangible as a fading shadow. The dream-woman—the world's desire—is a mere phantom."

"Everything comes to a man who waits," said Milner oracularly. "Every man's ideal

comes to him sooner or later; it may be to-day or to-morrow, or when his hand has lost its cunning."

There was a gentle tap. Walter pointed to the door, and said with a smile, "Perhaps that's her knock."

"Come in," growled John Milner, still gazing at Mrs. Dacre's portrait. Then the door opened, and Phillida, a letter in her hand, and a pretty blush of diffidence on her pretty face, entered the studio.



"THERE WAS A GENTLE TAP."

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE STUDIO.

"I believe you are Mr. Milner, sir," said the blushing Phillida, taking no notice whatever of young Mr. Croft, but favouring the elder artist with a sunny smile.

"That's my name, my child," said John Milner, "what can I do for you?"

"I've brought a letter of introduction from Mrs. Barker, Mr. Milner," said Phillida; "Mrs. Barker and my mother are very old friends, and she thought——" and here poor Phillida became very much confused indeed.

"It's very good of you I'm sure, young lady," said Milner with formal politeness. "If you won't mind sitting down an instant," he continued, as he handed her a Chinese cane chair, accompanying the action by a gesture which was half nod half bow, "I'll read Mrs. Barker's letter: she's my cousin, you know, my child," he added with object of putting Phillida at her ease, and then held out his hand for the letter.

Of course Walter Croft took stock of her: he ran over her perfections in his mind, being an artist. "Uncommonly pretty little girl," he thought. "Wonderful eyes. I wonder why she keeps on blushing like that. What a complexion she's got! By George, her blushes become her, and when I look at her, I don't believe that the roses in Romney's Lady Hamilton in her youth *were* exaggerated after all. He knew what he was about did Romney, when he painted those damask roses of hers. I should like to do a head of that little girl. That's the worst of very young girls, you can't do anything but a head of them; they nearly always stoop, or gawk, or sprawl, or do something dreadful. And then their poses! There's that girl; she's hooking her foot on to that chair, just as though she thought it was a fiery untamed steed, and she had to stick on or perish in the attempt. But it's a pretty foot—a very pretty foot." Walter was peeping from behind his canvas at poor Phillida while he made this mental criticism. Suddenly their eyes met, and the eldest Miss Fane blushed a celestial rosy red, and, strange to say, young Mr. Croft, who was a good young fellow, without a particle of wickedness in him (and it's quite possible for a young fellow to be good, without being either dull or stupid), blushed too; and

perhaps his blushes proved his goodness, for just as a tortoise draws its head and legs within its shell, and so disappears from mortal ken, so did young Croft incontinently vanish behind his canvas, feeling rather ashamed of himself than otherwise. "She'll look upon me as an impertinent snob," thought young Croft. "It's sometimes nice to stare, but it's never nice to be caught staring. I don't know that I was particularly criminal though: an artist can't help looking at everything with a professional eye," thought the rich young man, who was meditating making a fool of himself with Mrs. Dacre. "Now if she had been a model, firstly she wouldn't have blushed, secondly she'd have been pleased with my professional appreciation; but not being a model, I deserve to be soundly kicked for staring the child out of countenance." But young Mr. Croft's meditations were interrupted by the voice of John Milner.

"So you want to sit to me, Miss Fane?"

Phillida looked very miserable indeed.

"It was Mrs. Barker," she said apologetically.

"Oh, it was Mrs. Barker who put it into your head, was it?" said Milner kindly. "Well, Adelaide is my cousin, and she's a very sensible woman, she's always right—or thinks she is, which is pretty much the same thing. And so you want to utilise your time. You are quite right, Miss Fane; the path of idleness is the road to misery. You feel horribly uncomfortable, don't you?" said Milner. "You needn't feel uncomfortable, my dear," he added paternally. "Let me introduce you to a pupil of mine," he went on with solemn formality, still seeking to divert the girl's thoughts and put her at her ease. "Walter," he continued, "you couldn't do better than make a study of this little lady; in fact, we'll both make a study of her from different points of view. Now, my dear, the whole art of the model consists in retaining her pose and retaining her expression; when we have got the right pose and the right expression, all you've got to do is to consider my young friend's head that of the Gorgon Medusa: you can look upon his ambrosial curls as writhing snakes, my dear. Now the very sight of Medusa's head turned those who looked on it to stone; and when we get the right pose and the right expression, all you've got to do is to look at my pupil and petrify at once."

Phillida smiled, but she went on blushing.

"I think you'll find it rather fun than otherwise," said Milner, "that is if you're fond of dressing up, you know, and most girls are fond of dressing up. You mustn't mind our staring at you, we've got to do that, of course; and you mustn't look upon sitting as a punishment; and all you've got to do is to make your- self perfectly comfortable. That's where women are better off than men. I went into a friend's studio the other day, David Davidson's; his clas- sical man was doing a scene from Milton, *The Fall of Satan*, and Satan was hav- ing an uncom- monly rough time of it. The poor fellow who posed was supposed to be shooting through space head down- wards. David- son had asked for an expres- sion of agony, and the expres- sion of agony on the poor mortal's face was in- tensely life- like, which wasn't to be

wondered at, for he was lying upon a door which was very nearly upright, supporting himself on the palms of his hands which were upon the floor; a little more and he'd have been standing on his head: his face was purple before he had been at it five minutes; but Davidson was delighted."

Phillida began to smile.

"That's it, my dear," cried Milner suddenly. "Now don't move, it was the

smile I wanted; and you see we're merci- ful: and that smile's delightfully natural; and it would be rather difficult to smile at the word of command, wouldn't it, Miss Fane?"

Phillida didn't answer him, being wise for her age, but went on smiling.

"Walter," said Milner, "I don't think you'll have much difficulty in getting the ogress's mouth right now."



IN THE STUDIO.

The artist and his pupil were both working away as though for dear life. Walter alternately stared at his canvas and at Phillida, while Milner, with a quick and practised hand, dashed in a pretty likeness with a pencil upon a drawing pad. The sitting must have lasted a full five minutes, then poor Phillida's lip began to trem- ble, and the girl suddenly buried her face in her hands and burst into a flood of blinding tears.

"Oh, Mr. Milner, I'm so sorry," she said, "so very sorry. I did try, I did in-

deed; but I couldn't sit still any longer, I felt as though my head were bobbing up and down, and every muscle in my face seemed to be twitching."

"You needn't worry yourself, my dear," said Milner kindly. "Rome wasn't built in a day. We must walk before we can run. By time and patience the leaves of the mulberry tree are turned into silk. Wise proverbs these every one of them, and they ought to console you. You see

we can't compete with photography," he added kindly, as he held out the drawing pad, and showed his work to the astonished girl. "I've got all I wanted: this little sketch is sure to come in handy some day," and then he walked over to the well nigh finished portrait upon which young Croft was working; and taking no further notice of Phillida, began to chat with his pupil in artistic language, which seemed as Greek to Mrs. Fane's little daughter, upon certain abstruse points in the technique of Mrs. Dacre's likeness. Then with a movement of his head towards Phillida, still staring at Mrs. Dacre's portrait upon which his pupil was working, Milner smilingly asked young Croft whether he was any nearer his ideal now than he was half an hour ago.

"Of course she's a very pretty little girl," said Walter magisterially. "One doesn't look for the highest type of beauty in a girl of seventeen. It's just because her beauty is of the highest type," said Walter, referring to his canvas, "that I find it impossible to do her the scantiest justice; and while trying to produce a likeness, I feel that I am perpetrating a caricature."

"Oh, you think so, do you," said Milner; "that's because you're infatuated. I think she ought to be well satisfied with the portrait, and she doesn't look what she is, which is what Byron calls—

"Clay not dead but soulless."

"You wouldn't say that, Boss, if you

knew her better," replied the younger man.

"I don't want to know her better. It's wrong to think ill of anybody I suppose, but that woman has destroyed your career, Walter: she'll make you marry her, of course she will."

"I fancy Boss, that you're about the only man who *pities* me."

"A young man married is a young man marred," said Milner sententiously. "There's no doubt whatever about that axiom, boy, when the young man who is married is an artist, and when the lady is seven years his senior."

"No, hang it, Boss, not seven," cried Walter indignantly.

"Well, she acknowledged to five, so we may credit her with seven; though, of course, in your eyes—

"Age cannot wither her,

Nor custom stale her infinite variety."

I wish I could stay and make a study of that little girl, Boss, but I have promised to go to lunch, and it's a good long drive to Lexham Gardens."

"Oh, you're burning to be off, of course you are, I can quite understand it."

Then Walter wished little Miss Fane good morning, feeling that he had conferred an immense favour in doing so, and once more Phillida blushed, either because she was a silly little chit of seventeen, or, perhaps, because she agreed with the rest of the world in thinking that young Walter Croft was an uncommonly good-looking fellow.

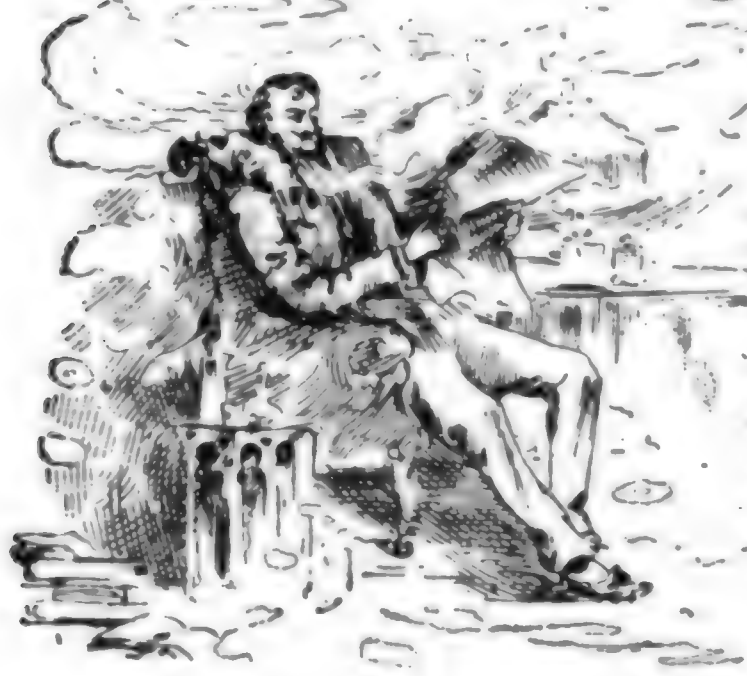
(To be continued.)



THE FIRST SKETCH.



There's a charm in attaining the top of the tree
 Do every one say who has done it
 And a parallel case (though you may not agree)
 Is to live at the top of the house do you see?
 Though folk will endeavour to shun it.
 In an attic I dwell, and my present abode
 Is pleasant, you cannot deny it.
 And although I'm aware that isn't the mode
 I'd strongly advise you to try it
Do!
 And live in an attic in quiet.



In the summer you know it is pleasant & cool.
 In winter 'tis warm and 'tis cosy.
 And your strongest objections I'll soon overrule.
 'Tis so dull and so lonely: I wouldn't be a fool.
 I look pretty healthy and rosy.
 And although it is true I am out of the way
 My attic is often a riot.
 I'm a sociable card and you'll find they all say
 My suppers are goodish, as diet.

Then
 My attic is not very quiet.

If it should so occur that I'm surly & rough.
 If poorly in mind or in body.
 Then I shut myself in and improve as I puff
 My tobacco and sit with a small quantum suff
 Of negus or good whiskey toddy.
 If I want to see life I can go when I please.
 If company falls I can fly it.
 And I think as I smoke my cigar at my ease.
 Old chippie there's nothing can buy it.
Puff!
 This life in an attic in quiet.





EALLY, there's a lot of money to be made out of canvassing, in a good line of business; but to do anything great requires the energy of a cockroach, and the pluck of a bantam.

I don't know why, but I have a weakness for any sort of canvasser. I can never treat him rudely, or send him off with a flea in his ear (the reader will kindly pardon the repeated reference to insect life, it has always been a

bugbear with my—but there, you understand).

May be that in a previous incarnation I held a pedler's license, or dispensed the gladdening *pomme de terre* from a hot potato stall; anyhow, I find myself here with a hopeless softness under the left ribs for the gentle art of the casual caller.

When living in a cottage on a high road in Kent, my innocent residence became quite a house of call for all the vagabonds passing that way. There was an open common opposite, where my friends encamped, and the calling started by a gentle rap, and the request for a little water. For this purpose, some old tin can picked up from a rubbish heap was handed in. Well, who could refuse some poor people on a country road a little water? It was readily given, times out of number; and a little later I saw a wreath of blue smoke rise from a hollow in the common, and I knew that the can of water was boiling.

For a few minutes silence reigned, and then the gentle rapping was repeated. This time it was a ragged child. Could I let her mother have a pinch of tea and bit o' sugar?

Now, a man who is just about to sit down to his own hot rolls and coffee, needs internal organs of a flinty make to refuse a spoonful of tea and sugar. You can't do that sort of thing, and go to church on Sunday.

Yes, you give the water, you give the tea and sugar, and you give a bit of bread with a dash of butter. Aye, and you give the woman an old frock of your wife's, and the man a pair of boots, and wish them well on their journey. Then you feel like a saint in a stained glass window, with a scroll inscription underneath, "Blessed is



"ANYTHING IN INKS TO-DAY?"

he that considereth the poor and needy." But when all the old lobster tins and Australian meat cans that have been discarded for the previous six months are handed in, when the servants' tea caddy has been emptied, and you have to entrench upon your own particular brand of Souchong—when every loaf of bread

you. He takes a seat in your den, and asks if you have been in the habit of giving these people anything.

You blush, stammer, and go as near telling a lie about it as circumstances permit. How can you tell a policeman that you have practically cleared your larder and wardrobe of everything barring bare necessities? So you simply reply, "Yes, a little water now and then, and a few crusts of bread."

But you somehow feel that he knows something more than that. A brief space passes in silence and the disposal of two glasses of whisky, and then the Inspector invites you into your own front garden. You follow him up to the gateway, and then, with the ghost of a smile, he draws your attention to some chalk marks on the brickwork piers of the gateway.

"Your house is marked," the man in uniform coolly remarks.

"Marked? How do you mean?"

"Why, these fellows will mark a house where they can get anything. Honour among thieves, you know, sir. But don't touch it for a day or two, and I will see you again. Good morning."

This sort of information makes one feel sad, and you ask of the winds, where is human gratitude?

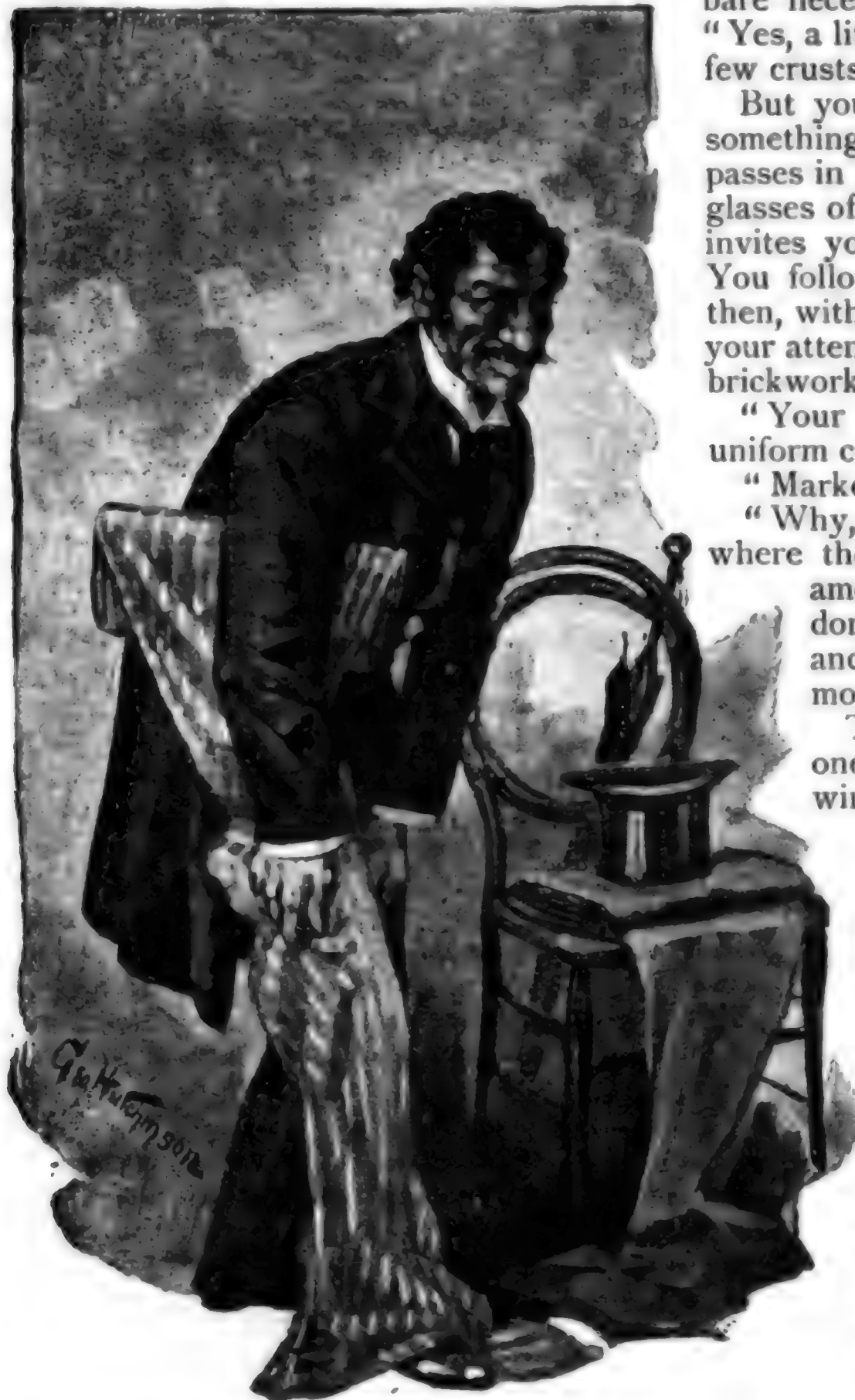
It is early morning a few days later, and the well-known tapping is repeated. You instruct that the door is not to be answered. But there are two men in the porchway, and one speaks loudly. Now comes a double knock, entirely different from the first. It is a knock that must be answered. What strange variations, to be sure, may be played upon an iron door-rapper.

The servant has responded, and meets you with a scared face. "Policeman, sir."

You go to the door yourself.

"Sorry to trouble you, sir. Just taken this man in charge for begging at your door. Will you look down at the station this morning and see the Inspector?"

You simply nod, and try to avoid looking the wretched delinquent in the face. And the pair go marching down the road—the policeman with the air of a man who has just conquered a kingdom, and the



"HE CLASPS IT TO HIS LEG."

in the house has been robbed of its crust, and you haven't an old boot left on the premises—then you begin to see the text, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," in a new light, and inquire of the police why something cannot be done to stop this continuous calling. The Inspector of the local constabulary looks round later in the day, and wishes to see

beggar like a bag of bones startled by the trump of doom. So this is what your complaint to the police has ended in. A poor wretch begging a crust has been led off to the lock-up, while his wife and children await on the common his coming home to breakfast.

But your wife is equal to the occasion (give me one woman's wit against the wisdom of a regiment of men). She sends out a good breakfast to those left on the common, and then packs you off to town for the day. You are supposed to be responding to a sudden call in consequence of the death of an aunt. As a matter of fact you spend the afternoon at your club, and the evening—well, it's years since you were at a music hall before, so just once in a while, you know. A man should always see what's going on in the world.

Next morning the policeman calls again and informs you that the Inspector was exceedingly sorry you were unable to attend the court, the prisoner had to be discharged for want of evidence.

Of course, you warmly share the Inspector's regret, send the constable on his beat a nobler man by two half-crowns, and then calmly pen a notice to your landlord, giving up possession of that roadside cottage at the close of the quarter. Having done this, you explain to your wife that it's about time somebody else had a turn.

But the class referred to are not quite the kind of people I have in view. It needs a city office of fairly easy access to bring around you the canvasser in full war paint.

Assuming that possession has been taken of an eligible pair of rooms, your name and calling duly painted on the doorway and at the entrance to the chambers, and you have come to the office in good time to cover a fair day's work.

Just as you are half-way through the morning letters, someone opens the door, drops a brown paper parcel on the nearest

chair, says Mr. Ephraim will call later on, and disappears.

Who is Ephraim and what is the parcel? You look at the package for a moment as though expecting it to get up and walk round. The office boy fetches it and willingly unties the string. Two lengths of cloth suitable for trousers! Is it a joke, a present, or a mistake? Of course, it's a mistake; possibly meant for the man who had the office before you, but whose present address is General Post Office, Johannesburg, Africa. Already you have posted off to him three tailors' bills, several hotel claims, and an odd writ or two. Johannesburg covers a multitude of sins.

It is such a gentle rap that you doubt whether there is anybody at the door at all, and you cry "Come in," with a doubt in your voice. The door opens again, and two Sisters of Mercy look at you as though ready to bear you off to some unknown haven of rest in another world. They speak no word, and stand looking at you in a way peculiar to Sisters of Mercy.

Blushing all over your face, and wondering why on earth they don't say what they want, you motion them to a seat. But one of them steps forward noiselessly—no one ever heard a Sister of Mercy's boots creak—and lay a card on your desk. You see in a moment it is a collecting card for some charity, but you pretend to study it earnestly,

and then look up with a weak attempt at a business-like air, and mumble something about being unable to do anything to-day. Still the Sisters do not speak, but they smile, and remain standing there smiling. What can a fellow do, I mean a soft fellow? Why, he fumbles in his trousers pocket, puts his name down for half-a-crown, and never mentions it to anybody. Well, it's worth half-a-crown to see a Sister of Mercy smile.

There is a shuffling step on the corridor,



"A PRETTY GIRL."

an uncertain tapping at the door, and your "Come in" is responded to by a large overhanging nose, a black curly thatch of hair, and two dark shifty eyes, while from the thick lips comes the softly whispered, brief introduction—Mr. Ephraim.

"Oh, you are Mr. Ephraim. That parcel—there is some mistake. My boy opened it, but——"

It was no harm, no harm. Would I not look at the cloth. It was all real wool, and not half the price charged at the shops. Really a splendid opportunity for restocking the wardrobe at no cost at all worth speaking of.

A mildly conveyed hint that there was no immediate call for a new pair of trousers, only warmed Mr. Ephraim up to the subject. With the confidential air of a friend who is really putting you up to a good thing, he whips undone a length of the cloth, and clasps it to his leg, then, with such an inviting smile, offers his leg under this improved condition for your admiration. He also backs about a bit in order that the effect of the pattern at a distance may be observed. As you do not appear eager to immediately throw off your nether adornments in favour of this new enticement, the other roll is put through the same performance.

At this stage you remark more decidedly that you don't want anything of the sort, and as a matter of fact have not paid for the last pair.

Mr. Ephraim treats this as a very clever joke, and then suddenly decides that he will take eighteenpence less per piece, and say no more about it. He also suggests that Aaron Brothers would make a couple of pair up, lovely cut, for the price of one.

As a last resource you tell him that already you have more pairs of trousers than you know what to do with. You have been giving worn-out pairs away to anyone who called for months past.

This chokes Ephraim off, but when at the door he looks back with the uncanny eye of a man who intends to be with you again shortly.

A mighty sigh of relief, and you are so once again buried in your papers. Footsteps are heard passing and repassing along the corridor, but no one stops. You actually get a fair half hour's work done. Now there is a soft step, a man's soft step; the step of a pair of boots very low at the heel and thin at the sole. It approaches, stops, passes; you are saved.

But it comes back; the door is opened, and something that reminds you wonderfully of the child's toy, Jack in the Box, puts its head and shoulders round the door. It is a man hugging a huge bottle, and in a cracked voice pitched on a top key, he asks, "Anything in inks to-day, sir?"

He notices your stony glare, and withdraws a bit. The manner, too, in which he hugs the bottle and keeps tight grip of the door knob, induces the fancy that he has often been suddenly moved downstairs and the bottle allowed to follow him.

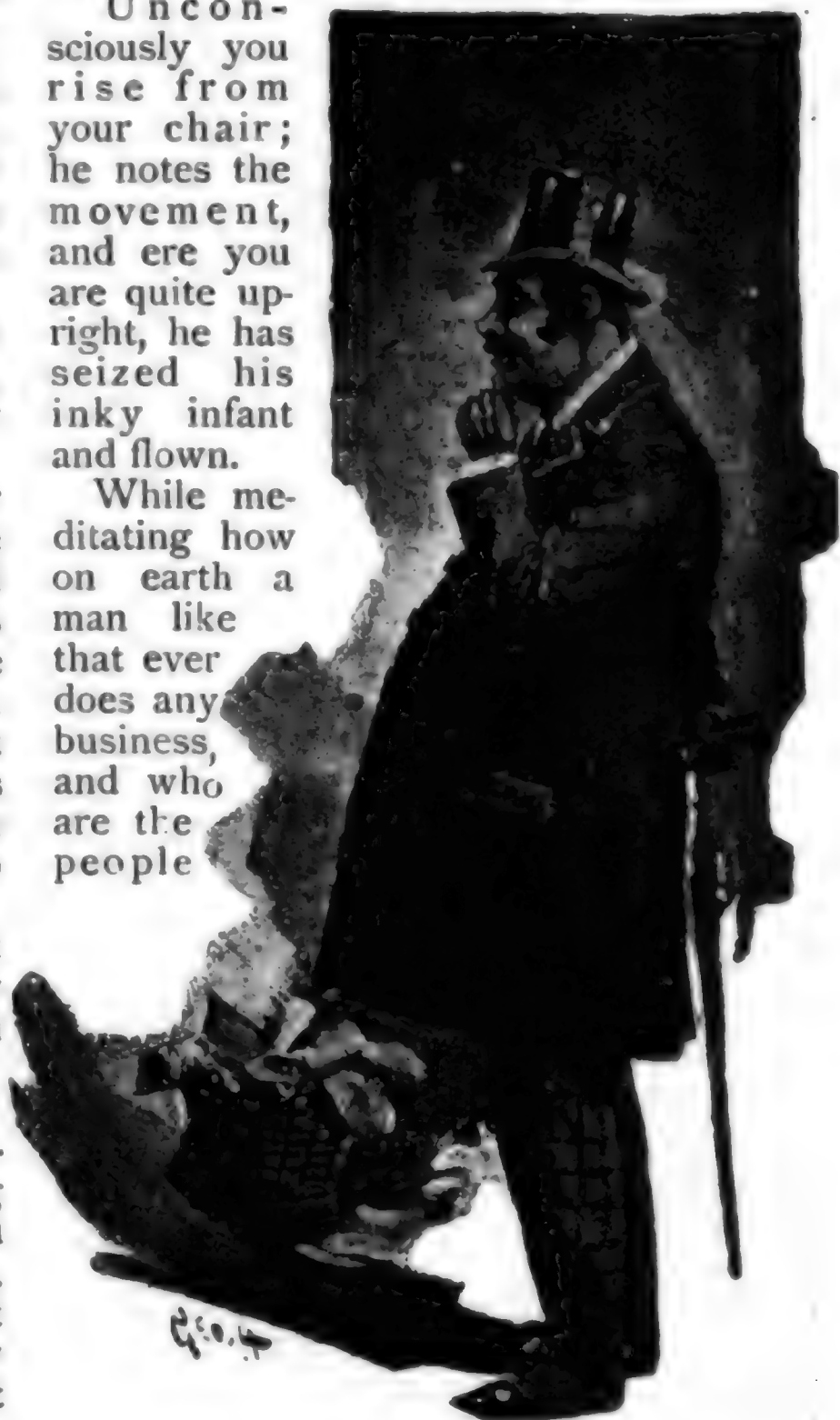
"Do you sell ink, then?"

"Sell it? Why, I have got through barrels in my time." And he looks it. "There you are; a gallon bottle of the best fluid that ever kissed the bristling quill."

Great heavens! Does the lunatic imagine that you bathe in ink, or drink it as an early morning beverage?

Unconsciously you rise from your chair; he notes the movement, and ere you are quite upright, he has seized his inky infant and flown.

While meditating how on earth a man like that ever does any business, and who are the people



"CAN YOU MANAGE A LITTLE CHEQUE?"

that sop up ink by the gallon; a double-touch, light as air, on the door-panel, brings forth your melancholy "Come in." Weary of this sort of thing, you do not look up immediately, but detecting the sound of skirts, you are quickly all politeness. "I beg pardon, pray come in, will you be seated?" A pretty girl. What a relief. She lisps, "Thank you," and alights on the front edge of your visitor's arm-chair.

With a well-arranged little blush, she expresses regret at having disturbed you; and this, of course, immediately calls forth an explosive, "Not at all, not at all." Then she goes on to explain that as you have taken such a deep interest in the Society for the Recovery of Lost Relatives (your deep interest consisted in having been badgered into giving half-a-crown subscription about a year ago), she thought you would like to know that it was intended to re-organise the Society on a much larger scale, in order to include within its scope the recovery of husbands who had gone away with the best intentions, but having lost their way in the many misleading paths of life, had never returned to their wives and children. To this noble end it would be necessary to send emissaries all over the world, and probably to secure the services of Stanley. As this would mean much expense, it was hoped you would see your way to doubling your *annual subscription*.

Venturing to ask whether it would not be better to spend the money on the wife and children left behind, you are met with a decided "Oh no, our mission is to bring back the lost one, other Societies will care for those at home."

Ah, The Parish Relief Society. This almost escapes from your lips, but not quite; then, feeling you ought to have something for your money, you get up sufficient courage to ask whether she is going in search of any of the missing

ones, because, if so, you might feel tempted to—

Your visitor, struggling to look ignorant of the meaning of your back-handed compliment, says "Thank you" very decidedly, hands you a neat little receipt, bows prettily, feels as though she would like to have stayed longer had the business of the Society permitted, and departs. For a moment you feel inclined to call her back and double your subscription, but remembering there is not that amount left in the cash box, you cool your ardour, yawn, and prepare to depart.

"Anything in pictures to-day, sir?"

"No, thank you."

"Beautiful pair of artist's proofs?"

"No, thanks."

"Here are two works by a well-known man. Just finished them specially for me. Two guineas the pair."

"No, I don't want them."

"Well, I'll put them in at thirty shillings, just to do business."

"No, I—"

"But just look, sir. There, I'll do the pair for a guinea."

"Why, I have bought those things at five shillings a-piece."

"What, pictures like that?—never. Why, they cost me three half-crowns without the frames."

"Well, I don't want them, anyhow."

"Have your own way then, guv'nor. Half-guinea the pair;" and he places them comfortably in the corner, and draws up a small receipt.

You make up your mind that it is the last time you will be bitten, for one day at least, and accordingly clap on your hat and rush out. But the landlord's agent has just waddled up to the doorway, and you rebound off his rotund figure.

"Can you manage me a little cheque?" he hints, after a well worked-up smile.

Now you would not mind what happened to that man at that moment, but you look very pleasant and invite him to



"TWO GUINEAS THE PAIR."

look in the next morning, when it shall be all ready for him.

The Italian girl with her tambourine and sunny smile is waiting at the door. You have never refused her a copper, and she looks up at you with confidential anticipation. She sees you look worried, and provides an extra special smile. She wins, and the copper passes.

In the train you wonder if your callers would give you what you have given them, were they able and you needed it?

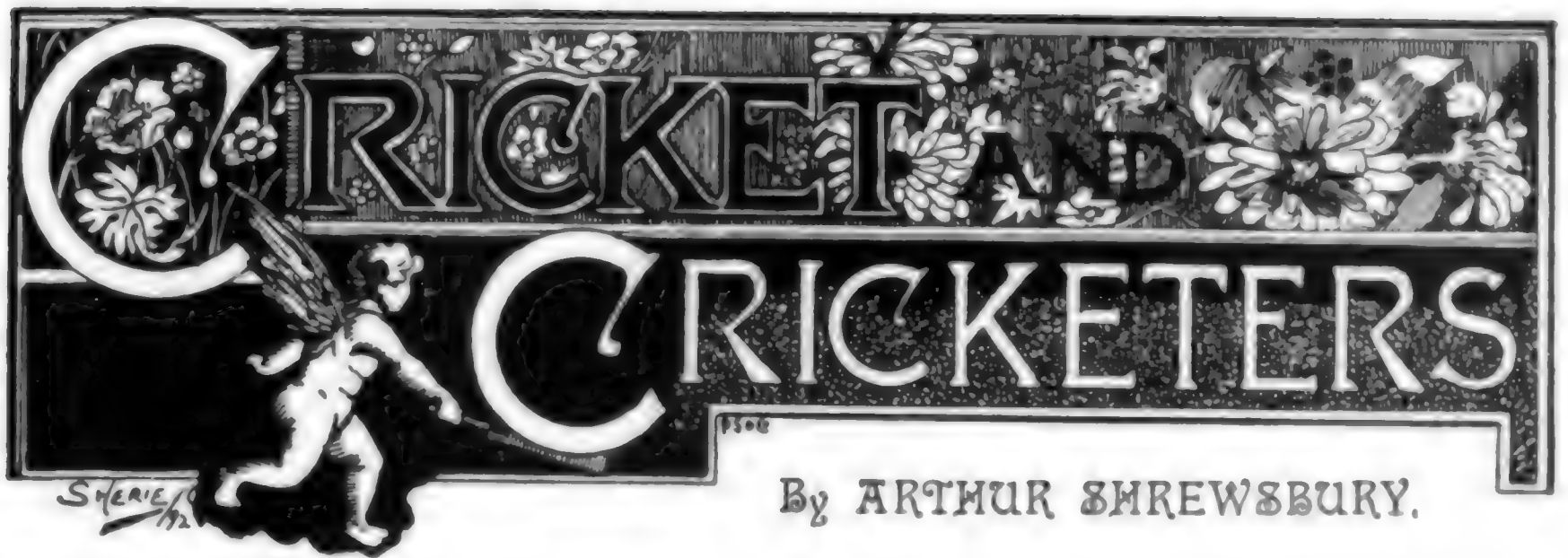
You doubt it a little, and consequently feel a somewhat better man than your fellows.

Happy in your own conceit, your semi-detached suburban retreat is reached. During the evening the wife suggests that you have a much happier time of it in the city than she does at home, because you meet so many people. This you feel to be hard lines, and there is a little bickering. But that is nothing to do with the subject.



"SEE A SISTER OF MERCY SMILE."

CRICKET AND CRICKETERS



By ARTHUR SHREWSBURY.

TRENT BRIDGE CRICKET GROUND.

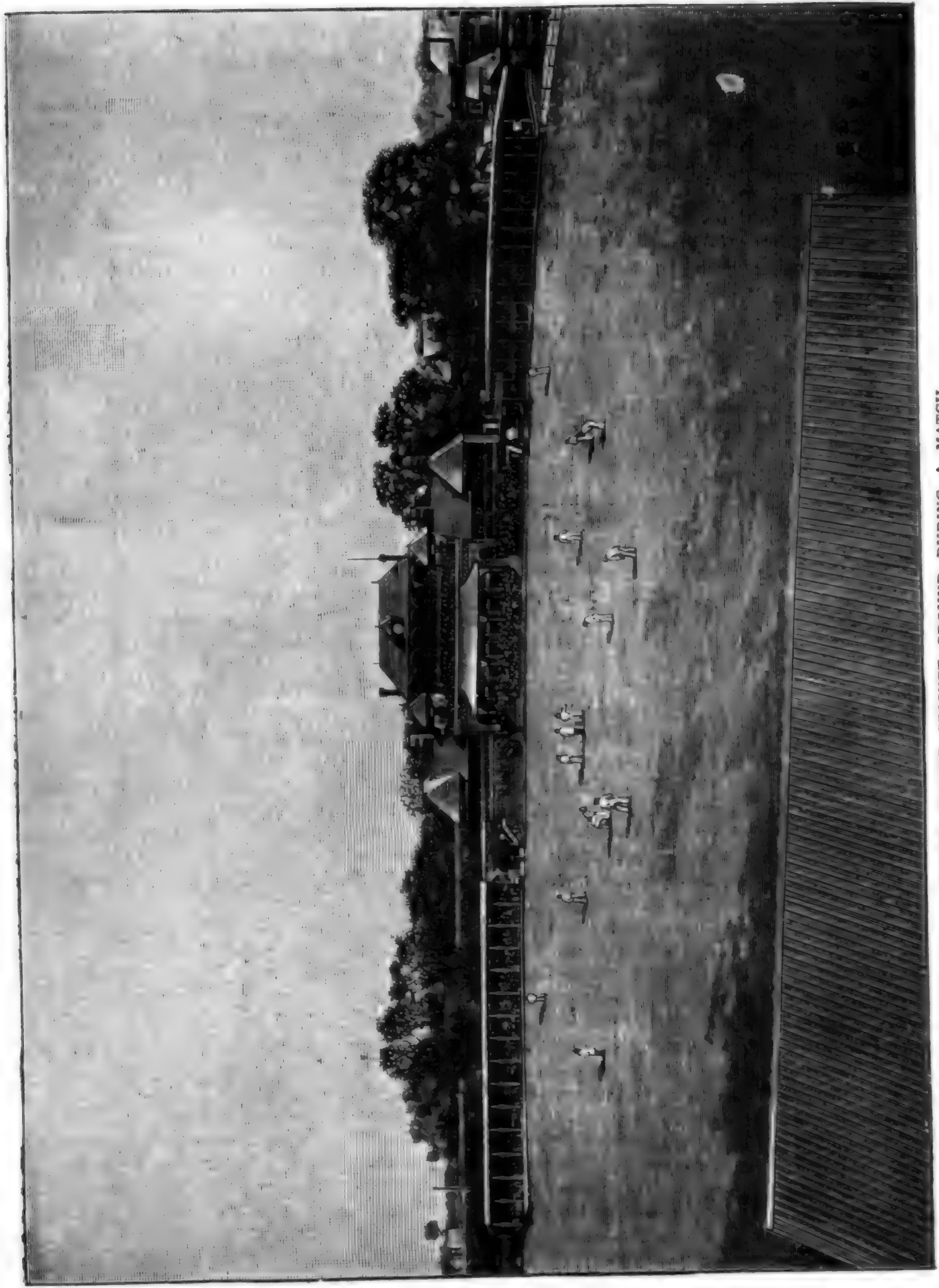
A GLANCE back at the time when W. Clark (the famous lob bowler), B. Parr, Guy, Redgate, Barker, G. Parr, Garratt, and others of the old school played on the Trent Bridge Ground, almost causes us to wonder whether the game as now played has any connection with what was termed cricket then; and yet, no doubt, the game at that period was quite as enjoyable, and the rivalry just as keen, as at present. "The Bridges," as it is termed, was first opened for county cricket on July 27th and 28th, 1840, by W. Clark, when Notts met Sussex, and sustained defeat by fourteen runs. In the return match at Brighton, June 15th and 16th, Sussex again won, by an innings and fifty-nine runs. Notts also played Kent the same season, June 18th, 19th and 20th, at Town Mall, winning by ten wickets. No return match appears to have been played. Since that time many old style matches have taken place; and if some of the younger generation of cricketers could only catch a glimpse of the manner in which the players of that day were attired—in their tall hats, high stand-up collars, and braces across their shoulders—it would, no doubt, appear to them comical in the extreme.

George Parr, the premier batsman of his day, appears to have played his first match on Trent Bridge Ground, September 9th, 10th and 11th, 1844, with eleven players of Nottingham v. five players of England and six gentlemen of Nottingham. A more modern school of cricketers comprised R. Daft, W. Oscroft, A. Shaw, J. C. Shaw, Fred Wild, T. Bignall, M. McIntyre,

F. Morley, S. Biddulph, A. Shewsbury, and others—a galaxy of talent which hardly any other county could equal.

Nor could any other county boast of such a trio of bowlers at one time as J. C. Shaw, A. Shaw, and F. Morley. "Bummy" Shaw, as the former was called, was a remarkable character in his way, and some very interesting anecdotes are related in his native village of Sutton-in-Ashfield about him, one of which I take the opportunity of relating. It was while "Jemmy" was engaged in a shooting expedition—perhaps on the high road at Sutton. After skirmishing about some time, "Jemmy" came across a flock of sparrows, and immediately let fly amongst them. It was plain to his mind that a bag would be required for the dead birds, but very much to his surprise, none could be found; when he coolly remarked what a surprising thing it was, that such small birds could fly away with so much shot. It had not occurred to him that none had been hit.

R. Daft and A. Shaw were the two most prominent members of the Notts Eleven; the former by his batting, the latter by his bowling. Their performances with bat and ball went a long way to make the team celebrated. In his day, Daft stood alone as the bat *par excellence* amongst professionals. He was noted for his graceful style and strong defence; while in the field, it was safe to place him in any position. It is not necessary to enumerate the many fine performances he achieved with the bat; suffice it to say, that, at the present time, Notts would be deeply grateful for a few R. Dafts and A. Shaws on their side. Some ten or twelve years back, no name was more familiar than that of Alfred Shaw, the



TRENT BRIDGE CRICKET GROUND DURING A MATCH.

celebrated right arm medium pace bowler. It is not going too far to say, that no bowler ever approached him for correctly judging the weak points of a batsman, as well as for accuracy of pitch, variety of pace, and thorough command over the ball. He could keep runs down, and stick a batsman up, on a perfect wicket, better than anyone else. It is generally admitted that when shelved for his county, Shaw had many years of first-class cricket left in him, and that a very great error of judgment was committed. There is only one other bowler I have met who, for accuracy of pitch, can be said to be almost on an equality with him, and that is E. Evans of New South Wales. William Oscroft was also a magnificent batsman, his leg hitting being terrific. Against fast bowling, he was the finest player to witness I ever saw. J. C. Shaw and F. Morley were bowlers who were in the very front rank, and would be so now, were they still playing. I could mention others who have done yeoman service for the county, but will now speak of a more recent school of cricketers—they who were playing up to the close of last season.

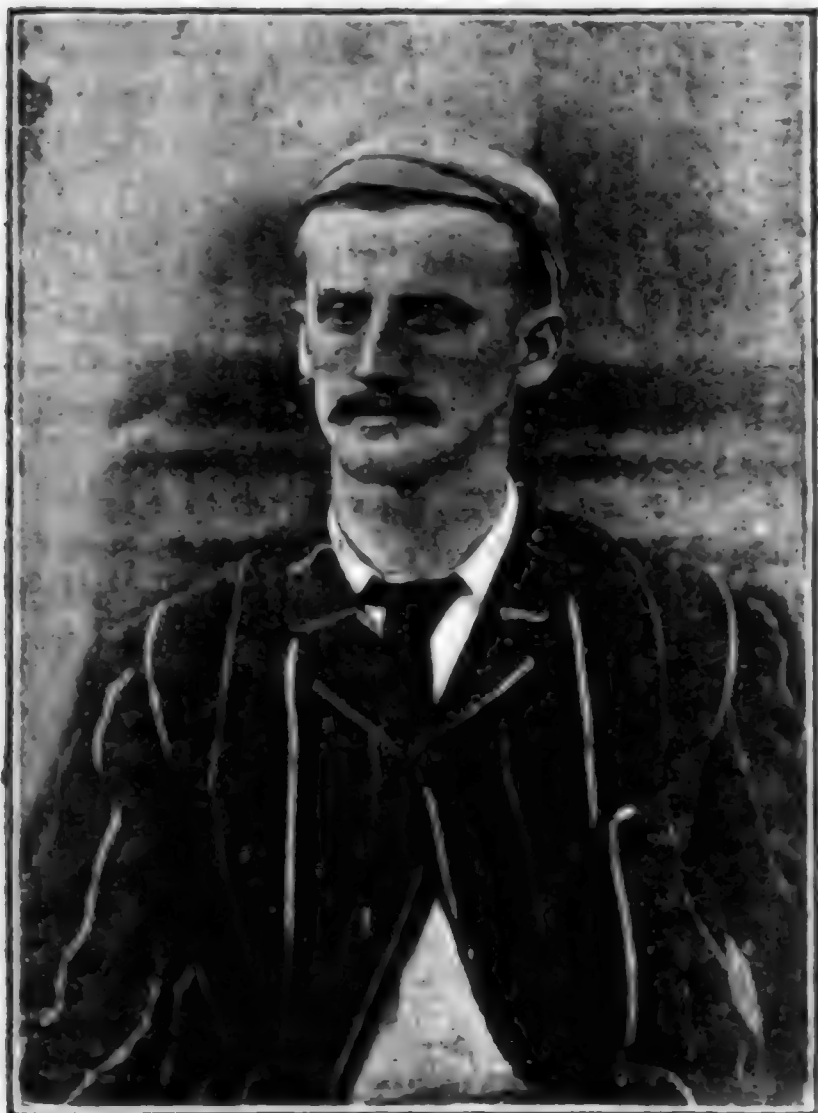
ARTHUR SHREWSBURY, born at New Lenton, near Nottingham, April 11th, 1856, first played for his county against Derbyshire, on Trent Bridge Ground, May 17th, 1875. Was prevented from playing in the previous year on account of illness. Has since played in nearly all the county matches up to date. In association with Alfred Shaw and James Lillywhite, he has promoted and played with four English cricket teams, that have visited the Australian Colonies. Did not take part in home cricket in 1888, being away in Australia and New Zealand with an English Rugby football team, of which Shaw, Shrewsbury and Lillywhite were the promoters. On his return he was, at the Exchange, Nottingham—the Mayor, Alderman Renals, presiding—presented by Lord Belper, in the name of numerous subscribers, with an illuminated address and purse containing seventy-two sovereigns. *On dit*, that in the summer of 1893 he is to have a benefit at the Bridges.

WILLIAM BARNES, born at Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts, May 27th, 1852. Played his first county match on Trent Bridge Ground July 29th, 1875, against Gloucestershire. I should say Notts has never produced another so sterling a cricketer in every department of the game. Alike

in batting, bowling, or fielding, he has always occupied a leading position. No one has a greater variety of strokes, and not one batsman in fifty so many. Once having got his eye in, he scores very rapidly. As a bowler he has a very awkward high delivery, making the ball whip back very sharp, and getting up quickly from the pitch. Has taken part in the leading matches for some years. Has visited Australia on three occasions with English teams. I was not aware until lately that William was born in "May," but should have fixed on that month as being the most suitable time.

WILLIAM SCOTTON, born at Nottingham, January 15th, 1856, played his first county match May 25th, 1874, against sixteen of Derbyshire at Trent Bridge. Has on many occasions been the salvation of his side by his careful and correct style of batting. When he first commenced playing he was the "Bonnor" of the Notts side, but subsequently toned down to patient play. A slow player, to many spectators, is very annoying, but is highly commended and considered to be playing the correct game, by the same critics, when a draw is necessary. Scotton visited Australia three times with Shaw, Shrewsbury, and Lillywhite's teams.

WILLIAM GUNN, born at Nottingham, December 4th, 1858. Played his first match for his county June 3rd, 1880, at Trent Bridge against Surrey; from that period he has been a fixture in the county team, and no one more thoroughly deserves the honour. It is not my intention to particularise the many large scores he has obtained for his county and in other important engagements. For a number of years, he has taken part in all representative matches. The close of the season 1889 found Gunn first in the general averages, both amateur and professional, with a total of 1,299 runs, averaging 38·7 per innings. He has a very fine defence, hits clean and hard to any part of the field, and in one respect has a special drive of his own; most people call it a cut, perhaps it is, in the vicinity of point which causes that fieldsmen to be on the alert, not as to whether he can stop the ball from such a hit, but whether he can get out of the way. Fielding in the country he has no superior, and very few equals. (Frank Sugg is the nearest approach to him.) A safer pair of hands were never stretched out.



MR. J. A. DIXON.

From photo by]

[E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.

to welcome a catch, and a batsman need have no anxiety as to whether he should be called upon to resume his innings, when a ball goes in Gunn's direction. T. Garrett, of New South Wales, when playing at Sydney against an English team, seeing that from one of his hits the ball was travelling in the direction where Gunn was strolling about in the long field, walked very contentedly away to the pavilion, our side following him. Gunn visited Australia with Shaw, Shrewsbury, and Lillywhite's team in 1886-7, this being the strongest team that ever visited the Colonies.

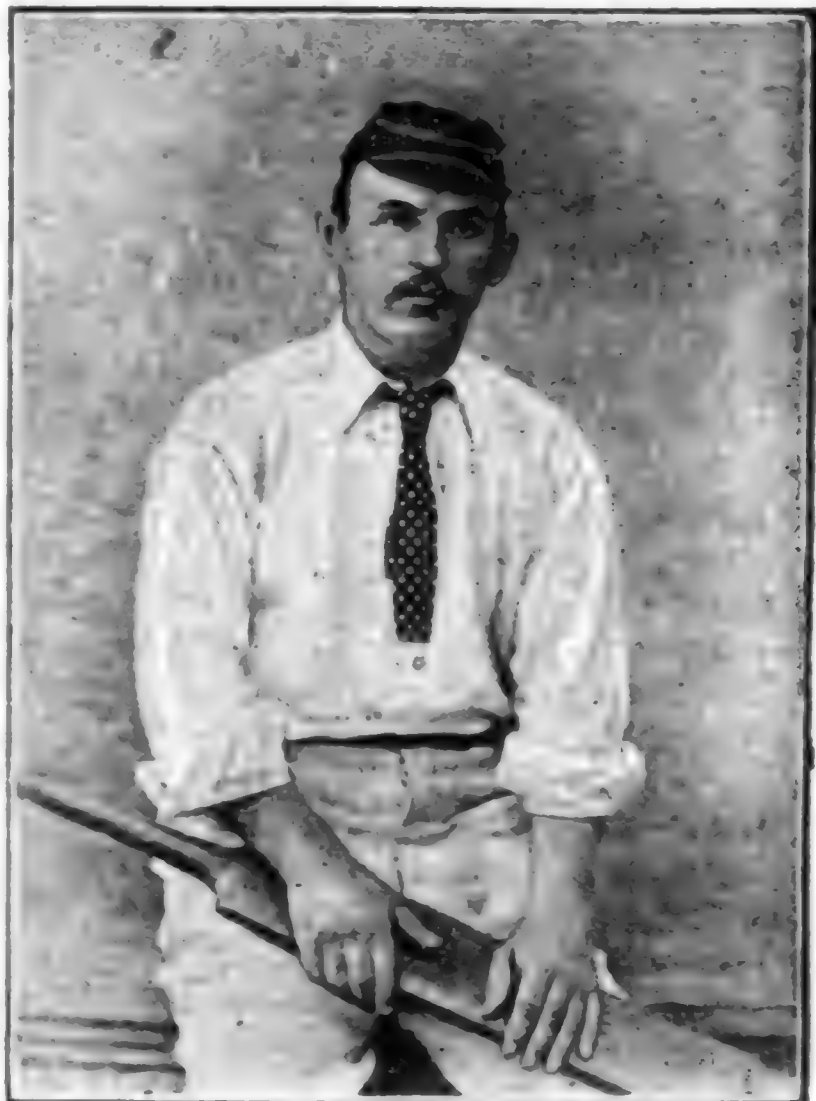
W. FLOWERS, born at Calverton, Notts, December 7th, 1856. Played his first county match on Trent Bridge Ground, Notts v. Lancashire, June 11th, 12th and 13th, 1877. He has proved himself a very valuable all-round cricketer, and on many occasions has accomplished great things with both bat and ball. I question whether it would be possible under any circumstances to disturb his equanimity and complacency, whether when batting, bowling, or fielding. He is certainly one of the most unselfish cricketers I have ever had the pleasure of knowing.

W. ATTEWELL was born at Keyworth, Notts, June 12th, 1861. His first county match was at Lords, Notts v. Middlesex,

on June 9th and 10th, 1881. No bowler at the present time can drop a ball, making it work a little either way, with greater precision, and yet maintain his form for so many overs. He is a magnificent fielder to his own bowling, or in any other position. At the close of the season 1889, he had the best bowling analysis in England, viz., 140 wickets, costing 11'15 each. Attewell visited Australia 1884-5, with Shaw, Shrewsbury, and Lillywhite's team, and twice since.

Mr. J. A. Dixon is the captain of the Notts team, an honorary position that is not to be envied. One of the most attractive bats to watch in England. Has played in Gentlemen v. Players matches at Lords and the Oval. Has bowled with fair success at both places, also at Belfast. If each member of the Notts team displayed the same determination, and the same firm resolution, when he enters the field, to do his very utmost for his side, then I think Notts would sometimes beat a better eleven than themselves. He imports great enthusiasm into the game, and is a pattern in every way for a cricketer to follow.

MR. C. W. WRIGHT, a devoted lover of the game, and ready to travel almost any distance to take part in a match. Has scarcely played up to his form when play-



A. SHREWSBURY.

From photo by]

[E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.



J. S. ROBINSON.
ATTEWELL.

SHACKLOCK.
SHERWIN.
BAGGULEY.

GUNN.
C. W. WRIGHT.

BARNES.
DAFT.

COXON (scorer).
SHREWSBURY.
FLOWERS.

From photo by]

NOTTS, 1891.

[E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.

ing county cricket, but obtained a lot of runs for his University (Cambridge). Is a good amateur wicket-keeper.

H. B. DAFT commenced playing as an amateur, last season being his first as a professional. A fair bat, with a strong, strong pull from the off to the on when the ball is pitched a trifle short. Rather inclined to overdo this stroke, although I am bound to admit he has obtained most of his runs in this manner. He can also cut smart and crisp behind point. A beautiful fielder, with smart and sure return.

R. BAGGULEY, born at Ruddington, Notts, July 10th, 1873. Played his first county match, Trent Bridge, May 7th, 8th and 9th, v. Derbyshire. Bats right hand, having a free, natural style. Bowls left, with a delivery resembling J. Briggs. He is well worth his place in the county eleven, and should improve very considerably. He is the midget of the team, being but 5 feet 3½ inches in height.

F. SHACKLOCK was born in Derbyshire, and plays for Notts by residential qualification. As a cricketer, I think he has

hardly done himself justice. At times he is dangerous, either batting or bowling. Bowls fast right-arm, with at times a distinct curl in the air.

Last, but not least, comes MORDECAI SHERWIN, born at Kimberley, February 26th, 1851, the popular wicket-keeper, who, in that unenviable position, has no superior among professionals. Played his first match August 14th, 1876, at Clifton, Notts v. Gloucestershire. "Mordy," as he is familiarly termed, has played in most of the principal representative matches for some years, and behind the stumps has rendered immense service to his side. No pluckier cricketer ever donned gloves, and if he only obtained a quarter of the runs, when going in to bat, that his determination leads him to expect, his name would certainly be amongst the first ten batsmen at the close of the season. Let us hope he may be able to play for years to come, for he would be very difficult to replace. Visited Australia with Shaw, Shrewsbury, and Lillywhite's team in 1886-7.

At the present time, there is no gain-saying it, Notts county cricket is under a cloud; both recruits and money are sadly needed. Many men who would be invaluable to the team are playing for other counties. What is the reason of this? The committee, who were acting at the time when these players could have been retained, are to a certain extent responsible for this state of affairs, although doubtless they had the best interests of county cricket at heart. Notts has always been noted as a happy hunting ground for cricketers; they have sprung up, like mushrooms, when wanted. No doubt it was believed this would always be the case. Times have changed, the county qualification has been

lessened, and young aspirants to cricket fame, not unnaturally, ask themselves the question, Which will be of the greatest benefit to me—to stay at home, or seek fresh fields and pastures new? Can anyone blame them for this, looking at it from a purely business point of view? The only way to keep rising talent in the county is to make the inducement to stay at home as liberal in every sense as the terms any other county can offer. That would be a most effective remedy. A plan is

now on trial whereby a few local clubs are being subsidised from a fund raised for the purpose, so as to see whether any fresh ability can be unearthed. Wretched gates are the rule at Trent Bridge, and the county gentry do not support the game too liberally. It is different in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Surrey, and other big centres. In these, large gates are the rule rather than the exception. A club and ground system would be a great advantage to Notts. But here, again, capital is required to carry the plan out thoroughly and effectively. Surrey should retain her position amongst the leading counties for years to come, for her funds are ample, and she spares no expense in

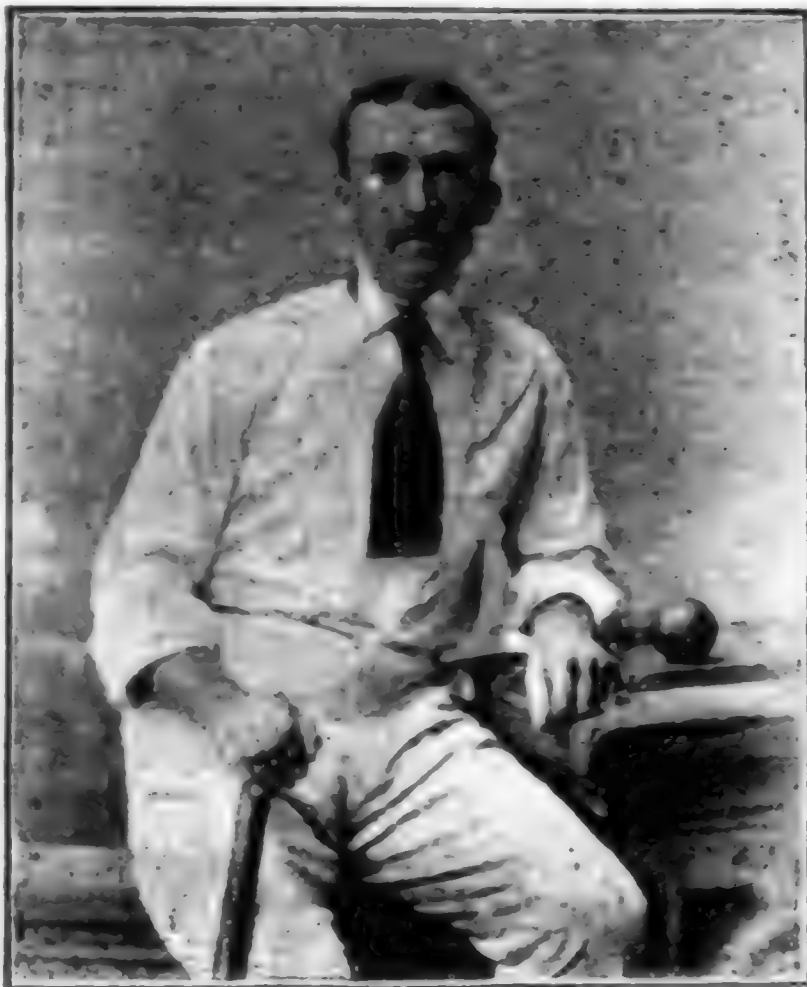
ferreting promising youngsters out, and if necessary, provides them with employment all the year round. What is even sounder policy, the Surrey executive are most liberal in their dealings with the county eleven. A good innings or bowling feat is at once specially recognised, the public also taking part in the recognition of talent. And it may be relied upon that this is money wisely expended. Some few years back, in a Notts *v.* Surrey match at the Oval, Barnes and myself obtained a lot of runs in our first innings. To my great surprise, I was called into the committee-room and presented with £5, to be divided between us. It was also impressed upon us with due solemnity that

we were never to do it again, which is the first and only instance, that I know of, where talent money has been given by an opposing side for runs obtained against them. It has been frequently stated by those whom we are apt to look upon as authorities on the question, that cricket as played now is certainly no better than it was twenty or twenty-five years ago. If we are to take facts and figures as our guide, it would be easy to show that greater individual scores and averages are obtained now,

which is certainly indicative of an improvement in the respect of bowling and batting.

We are then at once met with the rejoinder "Yes, but look at the great improvement that has taken place in the wickets. Why, in our time the ball used to pitch once, go straight over the batsman and wicket-keeper's head, and not alight until it finally did so in the hands of long stop."

I have often thought the umpire must have neglected his duty in not calling "wide" in these cases, since the balls must have frequently been out of the batsman's reach, *i.e.*, if we credit what I have quoted. Even if these things were true, did not the players even at that time



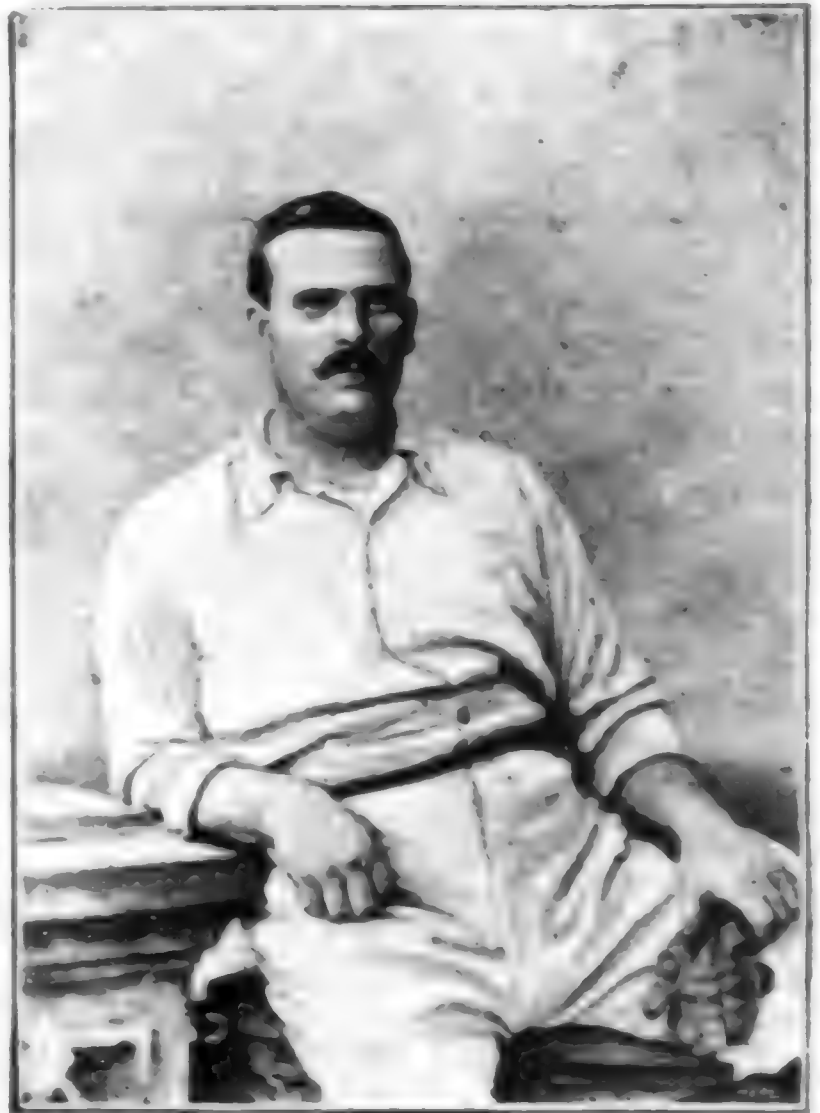
W. ATTEWELL.

From photo by]

[J. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.

have one good wicket during the season? And if the batting was as skilful at that period as at present, has not the bowling since improved? So that if we strike a balance of the old time inferior wickets, against the present date improved bowling, do not the larger scores and averages imply improved form? And it should be remembered that we have now two extra fielders to contend with. Fifteen years ago, or less, it was customary in arranging a field to have a long stop and long leg. The bowlers of to-day require neither, with rare exceptions, when a long leg is perhaps called into service. One ball to leg every three or four overs was the old rule; now one long leg hit in every three or four hours—I had almost written weeks—is a feature of modern cricket. Why? Because bowlers now bowl with their heads as well as with their arms; they vary, break, pace, length, height, and distance in delivery. This reminds me of a remark by the evergreen Tom Emmett, who on going in to bat on a bad wicket, when passing the bowler (Lohmann), exclaimed, "Now then. None of those ornamental ones."

Runs are much more difficult to obtain now than formerly, on account of the bowlers' off theory. Two, and sometimes only one fielder is placed to the on, all the



MORDECAI SHERWIN.

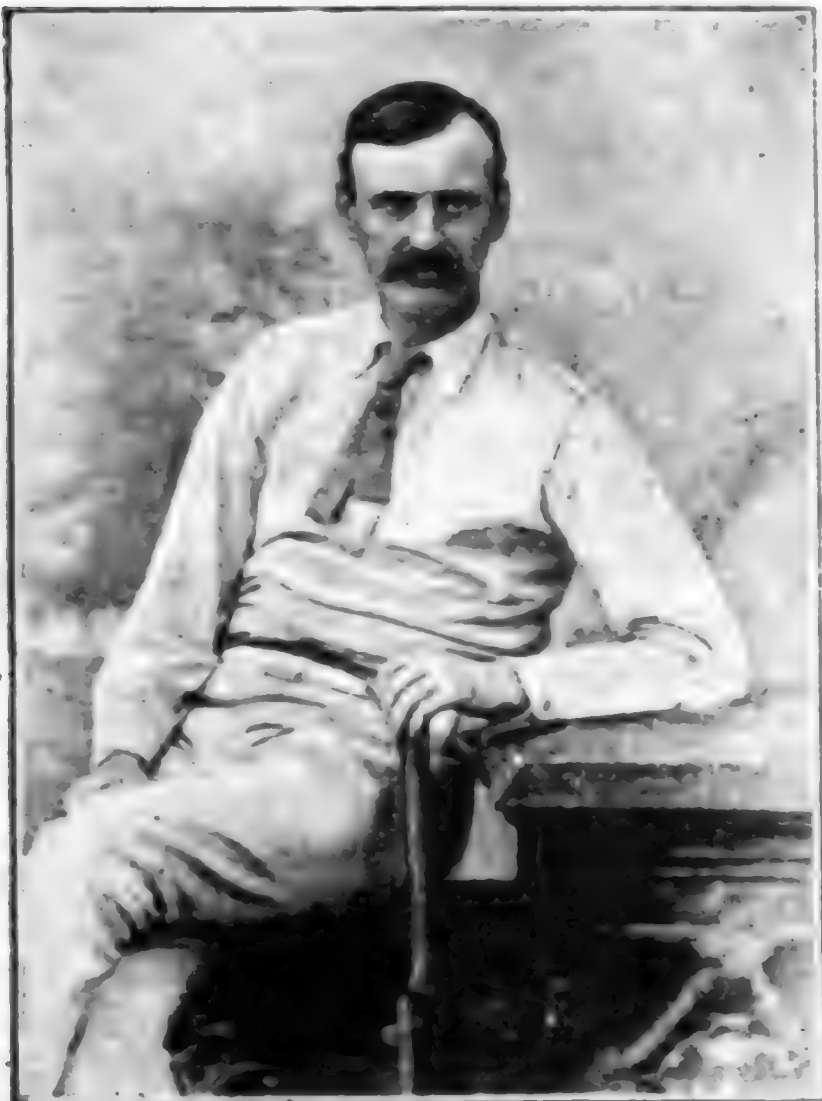
From photo by]

[E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.

rest being to the off, which is the reason why so many balls if only dropped a trifle short are pulled round. A batsman frequently gets out in trying to hit a half-volley round, and by not timing it exactly is caught, from what appears to be a very bad stroke. If a bowler, as is often the case, places four men, sometimes more, in the slips, and then bowls persistently to the off, is a batsman to be blamed if he declines to hit at balls which he feels morally certain would get him out? A trap is deliberately set, and you are expected to fall into it; and those people who are the first to censure you for not trying to score from these off balls, are the first to condemn you for not leaving them alone. Why do bowlers systematically bowl to the off? Because it pays them to do so. But supposing a batsman persists in leaving the off balls alone, then the bowler would of a necessity be compelled to bowl *at* the wicket. Time after time, I have heard batsmen exclaim, "What a fool I was not to let that ball go by. I knew it would get me out." More attractive and better all round cricket would be seen if bowlers would try to hit the wicket, instead of deliberately trying to miss it.

In the bowling department the Australians have taught us all a great lesson.

C



BARNES.

From photo by]

[E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.

They can do more with the ball than our own bowlers, and do it twice as quickly. The ball is therefore watched with greater difficulty. The Australians do not bowl for maidens, but are always experimenting with the ball. To see Spofforth in his day, and on his wicket, bowling at the best of English batsmen—they never knowing whether a fast or medium pace ball was being delivered, for Spofforth's action was always the same; sometimes with and sometimes without break, and he all the time working as if his very life depended upon his individual effort—this was a treat to witness. Spofforth and the man behind the stumps, who knew his every movement, had confidence in each other. No wicket-keeper was more likely to take advantage of the slightest mistake on the batsman's part than Blackham, than whom no better or pluckier cricketer ever existed. As a wicket-keeper he is unequalled, poor Dick Pilling coming close up to him, very little dividing them.

It is supposed by many who follow cricket that, as Lord Sheffield's eleven has been defeated by Australia in two out of three matches, the Colonials could organise a team which could beat a representative team at home. My own opinion is, that should they be able to bring over the best side the Colonies could produce (which would not be possible), England with an equal share of luck would win nine matches out of ten. How is it possible for them to be as strong as they were eight or ten years back? How many of the following names are missing from their ranks, all of whom were playing first class cricket at the time I speak of? *viz.*:—VICTORIA: Palmer, McDonald, Boyle, Allen (the equal of any left-hand bowler I ever encountered), Horan, Bonnor, Cooper and Midwinter. NEW SOUTH WALES: Murdoch, C. Ban-

nerman, Spofforth, Evans, Garratt, and Massey. I don't include A. Bannerman, Jones, G. Giffen (South Australia), Moses nor Blackham in the above, for they are playing still, taking part now in representative matches as they did at the time I have mentioned. With two exceptions (Turner and Lyons), are any of the new men up to the standard of those enumerated? They are dwarfs among giants. Both "New South Wales" and "Victoria" could have each placed a stronger team in the field then, than Australia can now.

It would be mutually beneficial to English and Australian cricket if a Colonial team came to England, not more frequently than once in

three years, so that they could play a representative eleven at home with a fair prospect of victory. It has been said that these visits ought to be sanctioned by the Australian cricket associations, who should have the selection of the team, and, in point of fact, sole control of everything connected with the trip. I don't think this plan would be so conducive to the highest class teams visiting us—unless a sliding scale of payment is to be introduced—as has been the case under the old conditions. The leading players have, with



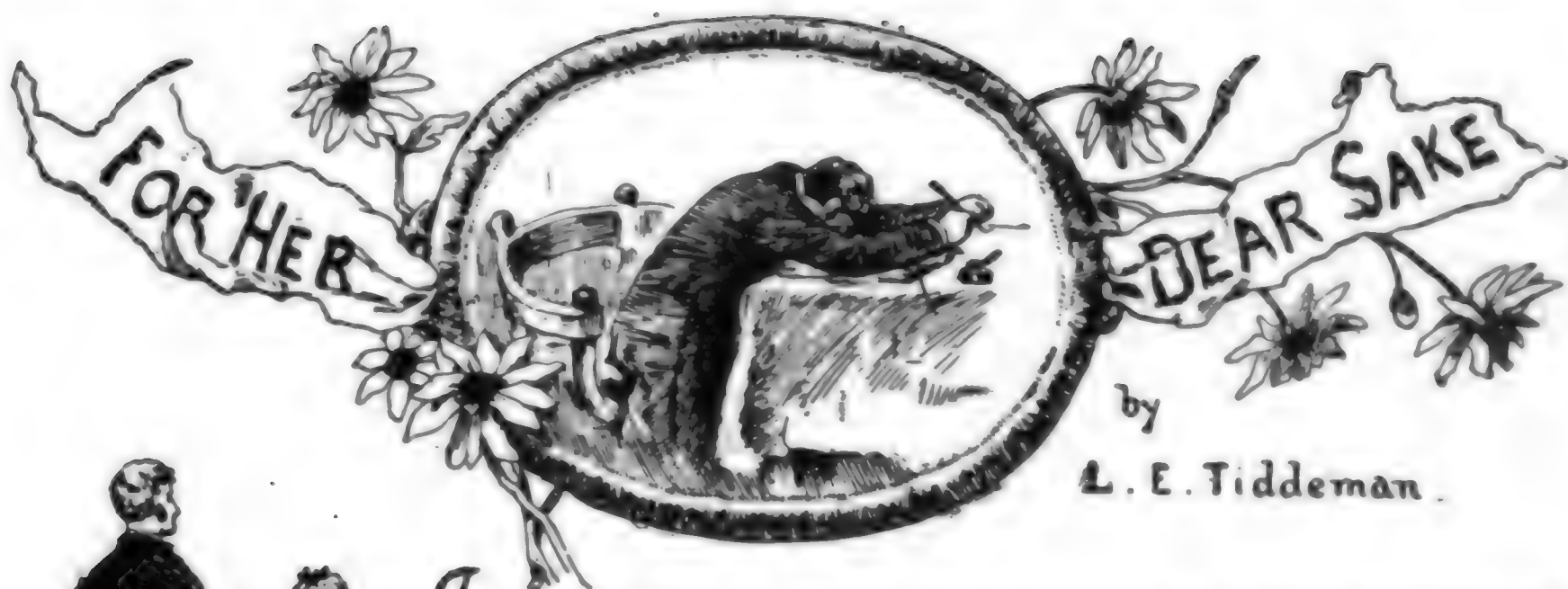
WILLIAM GUNN.

From photo by]

[E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.

scarcely an exception, had the greatest share of the cake, and the case is similar with English teams visiting the Colonies; remuneration rises and falls according to a man's reputation.

Let us hope that in years to come, our Colonial friends will be able to bring over such a combination that when representative matches are being played between the two great cricket centres of the world—England and Australia—opinions may be equally divided as to which side will prove victorious; and that Notts may be the first county to vanquish them on the famous old Cricket Ground at Trent Bridge.



I HAVE my chance at last, mother; I am to preach at Kirkhaven next Sabbath."

"In the forenoon, David?"

"No, mother, at night, and before a big congregation, so they say. In the forenoon another candidate will occupy the pulpit, and the choice will lie between us two."

"Ye maun gie a guid discoorse, laddie, for it would suit ye fine to be minister at Kirkhaven."

The old Scotchwoman had a twinkle in her eye as she spoke, for it was well known to all that her son's sweetheart dwelt at Kirkhaven, and that his devotion to her was of the deepest.

David Rintoul took the wrinkled hand extended to him, and raised it to his lips.

"The guid God bless you," said his mother, and turned away with a sigh. Her son re-echoed it as he entered his study, and sat down to what was to him a laborious task—the preparation of the sermon he would have to preach two days later. David Rintoul was cut out for a minister in all respects save one—the preaching. He could serve his fellow creatures, and God through them; but he had not the gift of ready speech, added to which he was afflicted with an overpowering nervousness, that made it difficult for him to utter the words that lay nearest his heart. Had it been admissible to read his sermon, things would have been easier; as it was, he was forced to learn, line by line, the discourse he had prepared, hampered by a timidity that only a woman could understand, and by a morbid dread

of criticism. And yet he was better fitted for a minister in the true sense of the word than most of his colleagues. The tongue that halted so had never lied; the eyes that fell before the gaze of carping critics were full of honest purpose; the hand that trembled as it turned over the leaves of the good book in search of a missing text, could be strong in defence of the weak; the voice that sounded monotonous and cold when engaged in exposition, could ring out boldly in scorn of sin, and vibrate with mingled tenderness and encouragement when addressing the sinner.

Such was David Rintoul, a man of the people, with the people's blood throbbing in his honest veins, big and awkward to look upon, brave in danger, timid in the presence of strangers, and withal staunch and true as the Master he served. And there he sat, pen in hand, in the little bare room he called his study, and tried to weave from out an excited brain, his trial sermon.

Late on into the night he sat. His head ached, the letters danced before his dazzled eyes, but, alas! no inspiration came.

Suddenly, as in a flash, thoughts crowded in upon him, shaping themselves into words such as he had never penned before. Something of the enthusiasm within him breathed through the closely-written pages. This was no cut-and-dried homily, but an earnest appeal from soul to soul, a spiritual call to arms, a cry from one struggling, striving soul to another. Words such as these were bound, if not to convince, at least to stir and rouse.

David Rintoul cast the paper aside with a deep-drawn breath of satisfaction. Humble as was his estimate of himself, he



"THAT WAS JAMIE DOUGLAS, EFFIE'S BROTHER."

felt that, could he but command sufficient courage to utter coherently that which he had written, he stood a good chance of gaining the coveted appointment, and with it his heart's desire—bonnie Effie Douglas. Her gentle face rose before him, rendering that which he had written blurred and indistinct. He went upstairs quietly, lest he should disturb his mother, and alone in the darkness, fell asleep and dreamt of the maiden of his choice. The morning of the following day he had intended to devote to the task of committing to memory and rehearsing his discourse, but Providence decreed otherwise. A dying friend sent for him, and all other considerations were laid on one side. Here was a "call" that admitted of no refusal; it never occurred to him to consult his own interests, and with unclouded brow and a heart brimful of sympathy, he went. In the sickroom no self-consciousness troubled him, he sat there patiently, doing little tender offices dexterously with his big, rough hand; his very presence bringing in its wake an indefinable soothing, a nameless comfort.

He rushed to the station at the very last moment just in time to catch the train, ensconced himself in the corner of a railway carriage, and, as soon as he had recovered breath, took out his MS. There was no other occupant of the compartment; nothing but the brisk movement of the train was likely to disturb his

thoughts, yet they refused to be localised, for his mind turned persistently to the sick man he had so lately left, hovering between life and death. Had he been of any comfort to him, he wondered. With this all-absorbing subject haunting him, study became impossible. To-night, in the solitude of his chamber, it would perhaps be easier: in any case, he would then be forced to face the difficulty and overcome it. Vexed, but not discomfited, he thrust his MS. in his pocket, and looked idly out of the window. A scene of stir and bustle greeted his unaccustomed eyes, for they had by this time reached Edinburgh, and the platform was filled with passengers. A group of young men stood chatting together.

Their talk was loud, their laughter was incessant. Amongst them—was it possible? Yes, there was no mistaking the good-looking young fellow to whom they were bidding adieu in somewhat noisy fashion. That was none other than Jamie Douglas, Effie's brother.

David Rintoul shrank back in hope of escaping recognition. James Douglas was no favourite of his, a young man in training for the church, but in conduct worse than the most worldly worldling, smooth-tongued, deceitful, a whited sepulchre. But Effie loved him, and was blind to his faults, therefore Effie's sweetheart strove to keep the peace, though he was too honest and true to make such a man his friend. What was his errand, he wondered. His curiosity was soon satisfied, and his heart sank low. This then was the other candidate. Well, fortune favoured him, he had good looks, a pleasing manner, perfect *sang-froid*, and above all, the gift of speech. Words never failed James Douglas; as for thoughts, when his own failed, he borrowed those of other men under the impression that they did quite as well.

How lightly he rattled on, how merrily he scoffed at his friend's high ideas, at what he called his exalted idea of the profession.

"They don't want a worker in Kirkhaven," he urged. "No, no, it's the rich folks you have to please, and they just

need an easy speaker—in short, a gentleman."

To David Rintoul, peasant born, the word, uttered with undue emphasis, carried a certain sting. He winced a little, and was about to reply, but thinking better of it, relapsed into silence, closed his eyes, and feigned sleep. At last, however, pretence became reality, tired Nature claimed its own, and he slept peacefully as a child.

At Kirkhaven the two parted. James Douglas wended his way homeward, David Rintoul betook himself to his humble lodging. To-morrow, he would see Effie. To-night, he must give his mind to the study of his sermon.

He snatched a hasty meal, and betook himself to his bedroom. His courage had revived, his hopes were high. He thought of his God, of his mother, of his sweetheart. Then he rose and felt in the pocket of his greatcoat. It was empty. Had his memory played him false? No—no; he remembered distinctly having placed it there. Yet it was missing. And so, with a sigh of bitter disappointment, mingled with chagrin at his own carelessness, he set to work once more.

The snow lay crisp upon the ground, the sun shone cheerfully, the bells rang out their time-honoured invitation. "To the kirk, to the kirk," they seemed to say. And thither went David Rintoul and Effie Douglas with love in their eyes. They sat side by side, they shared the same hymn book, their voices rang out in solemn harmony. They were happy in their youth, in their love, in their honest heartedness. And at last the service was over and the preacher stood before them. He looked pale and agitated, and even handsomer than his wont.

"And on earth peace, goodwill towards men." So ran the text.

A flush came to David Rintoul's face. His own text. How strange! And yet not strange, seeing it was so appropriate to the season. The strange part was to come. Letter by letter, word for word, David Rintoul heard his own sermon, preached by his friend—a masterly discourse, ably rendered. The preacher's utterance, at first low and indistinct, became deeply impassioned. He carried his hearers with him, borne on the waves of his eloquence; old and young were roused to enthusiasm, some were moved to tears. David Rintoul alone remained

unimpressed. He sat cold, and still, and stern; he could not meet his sweetheart's proud and tender eyes, which were filled with silent admiration. But he made no sign, though his lips moved. Over and over again he said within himself, "Be silent, this is Effie's brother, think of her." Like an accusing spirit he stood at James Douglas's side, and listened to the congratulations that were showered upon him.

"You look tired," said one of the elders compassionately, noting the young man's extreme pallor.

"Yes," replied Douglas, "all this that seems so easy involves a great mental strain."

"A great mental strain," re-echoed David Rintoul in a hollow voice. Every-



"HE FELT IN THE POCKET. IT WAS EMPTY."

body looked at him, and wondered why he thought fit to interfere so strangely.

"You must come home with me and see my wife," continued the friendly elder; "she is most anxious to be acquainted with you."

"No, he goes with me," put in David Rintoul, gravely linking his arm through that of his friend.

The latter made no resistance, but his step was feeble.

Out in the lonely woods they halted.

"Be merciful," cried James Douglas, falling on his knees. "For God's sake be merciful."

"For Effie's sake," answered David Rintoul between his set teeth, and the echo took up his words again:

"For Effie's sake."

"It would need a clever man to improve on such a discourse as that," said one and all. "Such depth! such vigor! such eloquence!"

Meanwhile David Rintoul sat in the wood alone, with the words of the text from which his rival had preached, ringing in his ears. "And on earth peace, goodwill towards men."

There was neither peace nor goodwill in his heart now; it was filled with bitterness.

The shadows across his pathway seemed typical of those that would darken the life before him. The cold wind made him shiver. His courage left him, but not for long. When he lifted his face from between his hands he was strong again. Out came his pencil and note-book, and with all his heart he strove. But his words were bald and passionless; he could hardly think, far less express his thoughts. Had he been capable of pretence he would have left Kirkhaven, feigning illness, but David Rintoul was true to the core; he could not lie. So, stiff and weary, he walked back in the grey December evening and listened once more, with what different feelings, to the sound of the church bells. "Go back! Go back!" they seemed to say. "No hope! No hope."

At the porch Effie met him; her sweet face was troubled.

"Why did you leave us, David?" she said.

"Because I love you, Effie," he answered simply.

"Do your best. But why need I ask you, you always do your best!" she added proudly.

He followed the service in a dull, dazed way, hardly conscious of its purport, thinking only of the ordeal in store for him. If only Effie were not present to witness his failure. Some smiled as they gazed at the uncouth figure above them, others turned their eyes away out of sheer pity. Would he never speak?

At last, by a superhuman effort, he mastered himself, cleared his throat, and broke a silence which had already become oppressive. What a contrast to the morning's sermon—how cold, how uninspired, how passionless!

There was but one verdict, and that the discourse fully merited—a failure pure and simple, and a miserable one too. David Rintoul knew this. He broke off suddenly in the midst of a lame, unsatisfactory sentence, and the poor show was over.

"I wouldna try again, if I were you," said one old man, not unkindly. "Ye havena the gift o' speech, whilk is needed for a minister."

The young man made no answer. He moved swiftly onwards with lowered head.

He walked as in a dream until he found himself far from the haunts of men—out in the open country, where the snow lay crisp and thick. The moon shone silvery clear in the dark sky above him, the wind howled dismally, waving the long branches to and fro. It was hours since he had tasted food—his footsteps faltered. There, in the silent meadow, he sank upon the ground, and fought his battle. It was a hard one. Envy was there to be mastered, hate must be slain with a sharp sword, revenge must be stifled, if he called himself a Christian.

David Rintoul rose victorious. Alone on Christmas Eve, far from the home he loved so dearly, he stood—a conquering hero, though unsung.

"It is finished," he said solemnly, looking up at the twinkling stars with a smile. Then, Scotch to the backbone, and therefore tenacious of the slightest exhibition of feeling, he drew himself up to his full height, shook his gaunt figure as if to shake off all sentimentalism, and trudged back in the direction of Kirkhaven. It was already ten o'clock, but he felt he could not pass the Douglas's door. Appearances must be kept up. Above all, Effie's feelings must be considered.

He entered the brightly-lighted sitting-room with a cheerful "Good Evening." Supper was spread. Effie's father, with

contracted brow, looked up, and gravely responded to the greeting. James was silent; his sweetheart glanced across at him with a look of mingled love and sympathy, far better than words.

"David," said Mr. Douglas briefly, "I suppose by now that you are ready to acknowledge the truth of what I have so often told you. You will never make a preacher. I wonder you had the courage to make such an exhibition of yourself, after the sermon we had in the forenoon."

career with a lie; let it be the last, lest while you preach to others, you yourself should be a castaway."

He was answered by the fair-sounding words that came so readily to the lips of James Douglas. They failed to carry conviction with them, glibly as they were uttered.

David Rintoul looked at him, long and earnestly.

"God help you," he said, with a sigh, and dropped the hand he held.



"FOR GOD'S SAKE BE MERCIFUL," CRIED JAMES DOUGLAS.

He glanced proudly across at his son, as he spoke. Jamie looked down. He could not meet David Rintoul's flashing eyes.

"I will be a minister, and nought else," answered the latter quietly. "Good night, sir. Come, Jamie!"

The other rose like a dog at his master's bidding, and followed. As the two walked side by side, David Rintoul spoke from his heart, neither stammering nor seeking for words.

"If I keep your secret, Jamie," he said in conclusion, "you must see that I do not live to regret it. You start on your new

"Good heavens! what is that?" cried Douglas, pointing eastward.

The sky glowed crimson, though all around was black; great hissing flames leaped heavenward.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" shouted both men in a breath. Then, as by common consent, though no word passed between them, they sped towards the town, still calling loudly. Sleepers moved uneasily upon their pillows, roused, and flew to the window. The streets were soon alive with spectators. Down flew the engine, rattling over the cobble stones.

When they arrived at the scene of the

disaster, the two young men were breathless. James Douglas stood apart and watched. David Rintoul set to work, a rôle that suited him better.

There were many ready and willing to help, but they needed direction, and had sought for it in vain. Who more able to give it than David Rintoul? Surely none. The disorganised crowd fell as by magic into discipline. A cordon was formed; danger to the careless onlookers avoided, assistance given promptly to the firemen.

"Are there any folks inside?" asked the young minister.

They told him all were safe; but even as they spoke a cry went up, a cry so shrill and terrible that all—even those on the outskirts of the crowd—stood aghast, and strained their eyes in the direction of the burning building.

An old man stood at one of the upper windows, with his hands outstretched in supplication. The light fell upon his agonised face, and the flames seemed to play in fierce mockery about his scant, grey hair. One of the firemen rushed forward and ascended the ladder amidst the cheers of the spectators. Half way up he paused, and a moment later leapt to the ground. It was too late, he said; the thing was impossible.

"Not so," cried David Rintoul, springing forward, "I will go."

They tried to hold him back; they told him that the young and strong life must not be sacrificed for the old and failing. He did not heed, but with scant ceremony thrust them from him. Slowly and carefully, for the smoke blinded him, he mounted upwards. The flames hissed and whirled, the sparks from the burning wood flew in his face.

"God bless him," said one bystander, in a broken voice.

The speaker was Mr. Davidson, the elder. Was this the man he had ridiculed a few hours since? Was this the hobbledehoy who could not string two words together, who trembled as he stood, safe and sound, in the old carved pulpit at the kirk?

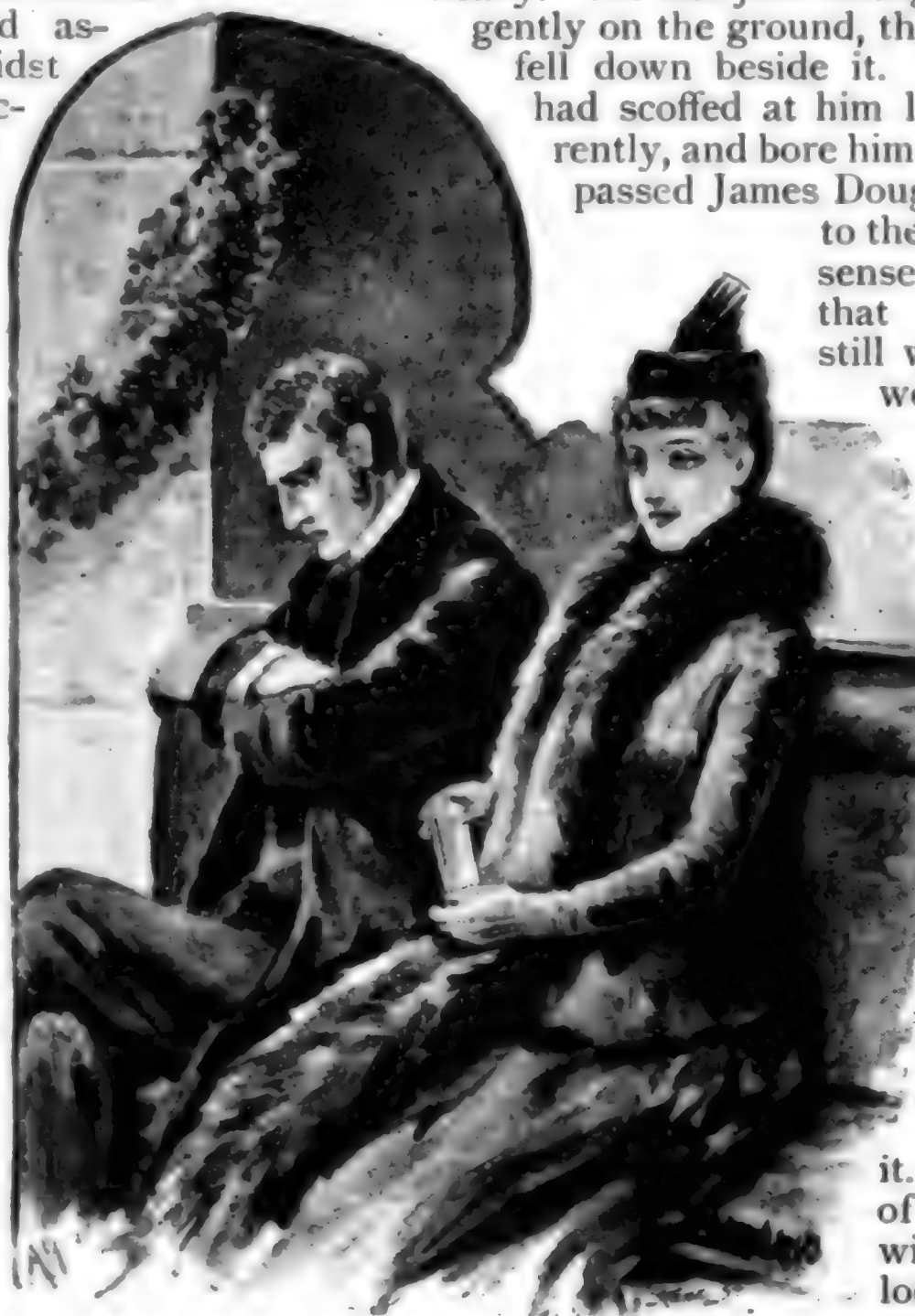
Well, he did not tremble now, though those who watched him were full of fear. His voice rang out in tones of encouragement.

"A moment more, and I shall be with you. Keep up your heart."

The people held their breath, but when he reached the summit of the ladder, a great cry of thankfulness went up, in which even James Douglas joined. Would he be able to return, they wondered? The flames lapped fiercely at the ladder, great burning beams fell from time to time, each moment the heat grew more intense, the danger more imminent. Slowly he descended, for the burden he carried was heavy. He had just strength left to lay it gently on the ground, then, with a sigh, fell down beside it. The men who had scoffed at him lifted him reverently, and bore him away. As they passed James Douglas, it occurred

to them, with a sharp sense of contrast, that he had stood still while the others worked, too concerned about his own safety to lend a helping hand.

For many a day David Rintoul lay between life and death. In his delirium he talked with a freedom foreign to his nature. Effie Douglas heard it. She came out of the sick room with a strange look in her blue eyes, and went



DAVID RINTOUL AND EFFIE DOUGLAS IN KIRK.

straight to her brother. Her very glance bore with it an accusation.

"Yes," he said quietly, not waiting for words, "it is true."

Then she turned from him, still silent as death, and resumed her post. She had loved her sweetheart before, but this new feeling was stronger than any she had ever known. It filled her heart to the brim, and found no vent in speech. Like David Rintoul, she could only serve.

And so, after weary days of pain and weakness, in the springtime, when the violets and cowslips began to bloom, and the woodpecker was heard; when the raven built his nest, and the dandelion coloured the grass, a strange thing happened. David Rintoul, with his sweetheart by his side, and his mother beaming fondly upon both of them, lay on a couch by the window, and rejoiced in the feeling of returning strength.

"The world is very big, Effie lass," he said, with a faint smile; "and there is room for all of us. Dearly as you love Kirkhaven, you love me better still; and when I have made a home, you will come to me."

She bowed her head in silent assent and took his thin hand in hers.

"Hark!" cried his mother, "hark!" It was the tramp of many feet she heard; they paused outside the door. It was thrown open. The little room was filled

in a moment, and a goodly company it was. All the leading men in Kirkhaven were there; the same who had laughed the young minister to scorn that Sabbath evening. They came to-day with other words upon their lips; but here and there a speaker found his voice grow tremulous, and once or twice eyes unused to weeping grew dim with sudden moisture.

"What have I done to deserve this honour?" asked David Rintoul; "I, who tried to preach to you, and failed so miserably."

They gave him no answer,

but a smile went round.

And thus it happened to his own extreme amazement that David Rintoul was chosen as minister of Kirkhaven.

"The best we have," say one and all, and they should know, seeing that he has worked among them for half a lifetime.



SLOWLY HE DESCENDED, FOR HIS BURDEN WAS HEAVY.



PRO-FESS-OR-R!"

"I'm coming, my love. I'm coming. Can't you see I—I'm——coming?" somewhat lamely concluded the Professor, suddenly taken aback to find that he had no excuse ready.

Mrs. Wayne inserted the hook of her parasol into the Professor's coat-tails, and landed him wriggling, flushed, and impotently furious upon the verandah floor.

The Professor glared at her. "If—if you were only a student," he said wrathfully, "I should know how to deal with you. You—you put me to open shame. How am I to assert myself at the dinner-table before these New York *gourmands*, if you're to come fishing for me at all hours out of that accursed window. D'you take me for a catfish?"

"Wyncroft," said Mrs. Wayne sternly, "a truce to this prevarication. Have you been twenty-seven times round the gravel walk at a brisk run?"

"Well, you see, I was engaged——"

"Have you, or haven't you? The truth, if you please. Don't prevaricate."

"Well, no, I—I—I haven't. I loathe the gravel walk. It's—it's perfectly beastly to go trotting round there like a camel in a circus——"

"Camels don't trot, Professor. They're like you—they shuffle."

"Well, I haven't; and I don't mean to. There! I'd need the seven capacious stomachs of a camel to hold all this filthy water you make me drink. I'm not a tank."

"Have you taken fourteen tumblers of the sulphur, ten of the saline, and half-a-dozen from the warm spring? Answer me."

"I've no intention of becoming a mineral water company in my own person, so I

haven't done anything of the sort. If you'd only let me alone, I should enjoy the place far more."

"Let you alone, Professor! Why, what d'you suppose I came here for?"

"To make me uncomfortable," the Professor wrathfully retaliated. "I can't imagine any other reason. Isn't this place alone enough to do that? Look at the forest primeval. You would come—dragged me from my books—from McGill University—from all that made life worth living; and now, if I speak to a good-looking girl, you haul me away as if I were a bull-frog on a hook. There's an English girl who is thoroughly up in the Coleoptera."

The Professor darted to the window and looked out on the verandah, waving his hands excitedly to a party of ladies who were slowly walking around the house. Mrs. Wayne followed him to the window.

A clearing of twenty acres had been made in the "forest primeval" for the building of the Caledonia Springs Hotel, a gaunt, wooden erection which was given over to solitude during the winter and spring. Beyond the rude gravel walk, were charred stumps and rotting trees; beyond them, nothing but forest pines towering to the sky—primitive giants knee-deep in ferns and undergrowth. Three little streams of water welled up from the heart of the bush; three little green pagodas sheltered the sacred streams; three times a day was the Professor haled thither by his wife to drink an uncomfortable quantity of whichever spring they first reached; three thousand times a day the Professor

wriggled, and writhed, and vowed to end such intolerable tyranny. And this had gone on for a week. For a whole week, the *élite* of Montreal, and Ottawa, and Toronto, and New York had sat on the verandah, watching the struggle with languid interest or amusement. The betting was rather in favour of Mrs. Wayne. Professor Wayne looked so small, and fragile, and childlike, in his alpaca coat and light trousers; and Mrs. Wayne so tall and stern, with a Roman nose which her enemies averred had been stolen from some unhappy man and affixed to her own face. She was accustomed to rule the Professor with a rod of iron, and her daughter Cynthia also. When she commanded them to pack and leave Montreal, they packed and left the same evening; when she ordered them to cross the Ottawa at Grenville, and take the L'Original stage for Caledonia Springs, resistance never entered their minds. Tired, dusty, mosquito-bitten, worn out, they reached the Springs. Without allowing them to efface the stains of travel, Mrs. Wayne marched them down to the Springs to quaff of the healing waters. Cynthia and the Professor did not want to be healed. "But," said Mrs. Wayne, "you don't suppose we're going to stay here without drinking enough to last us for the rest of our lives? Drink, Professor. Cynthia, drink."

The Professor and Cynthia had been drinking, metaphorically speaking, similar bitter draughts for many years. Wherever Mrs. Wayne dragged them, there were to be found the waters of Marah also. Ofttimes, the Professor would

wake in the night with dim visions of escape from this hateful tyranny, but at dawn he resumed his chains. He noticed that even the mosquitoes avoided his better half. Oh! the pity of it that he hadn't the sense of a mosquito. And now, when that delightful English girl pitied his misery, Mrs. Wayne hauled him on to the verandah with her parasol, and made him appear ridiculous in the eyes of everyone. It was unfortunate, too, that at the very moment he should have been holding forth on the freedom of Canadian institutions. All men were free, the Professor had stated. "All men were free except——"

"The Professor," added the English girl, as he disappeared through the window.

"I wish to speak to you, Professor," said Mrs. Wayne severely, hooking him back into the room.

The Professor sat down. "My dear," he said gently, "I don't wish to unnerve you, but if this goes on much longer, I shall go off."

"Pooh!" said Mrs. Wayne contemptuously. "You've the constitution of an ostrich."

"I was not," said the Professor, longing to be out in the sunshine, chasing butter-



"MRS. WAYNE INSERTED THE HOOK OF HER PARASOL INTO THE PROFESSOR'S COAT-TAILS."

flies—"I was not alluding to my health. I—I merely threw out a hint. If you can't see it now, perhaps you will some day. Human endurance, as well as the human stomach, has its limits."

Mrs. Wayne vouchsafed no answer to this remark. "Mr. Fraser comes down to-night," she said. "You will command Cynthia to marry him."

"Why, he's older than I am," said the Professor. "Besides, there's Jimmy McLeod."

"Mr. Fraser comes down to-night, and you will command Cynthia to marry him."

"I shall do nothing of the sort."

"Yes, you will, Professor. I'm the head of our household."

"No," said the Professor, stung into open rebellion. "You're not. You're a tyrannical usurper whose reign is over. I'll not submit to it. You're too fond of power. My life's a burden to me. I don't much mind it for myself, but you *shan't* make Cynthia unhappy; and she *shall* marry Jimmy."

Mrs. Wayne was astounded. "You dare to turn, Pro-fes——"

"Of course. You treat me like a worm, and even a worm is allowed to do that."

The Professor looked round the gaudy parlour. Something carried him back to the youthful days when in a fit of enthusiasm he had proposed to his wife. Then her nose and views on life were not so pronounced. She had even been fond of him, and mended his socks. Now their condition was scandalous, unless Cynthia could get at them surreptitiously. In those days, he had dreamed of happiness, of love, sympathy, hope, joy, ambition. Now, he saw himself a disappointed, battered old man, whose only hope was in Cynthia. What had become of his day-dreams? Where had everything vanished that he should be nothing more to the world than a bookworm, a mole burrowing through dark ways which never led to the light? Oh, it was bitter to look back upon the arid, dusty road, bitter to stand halfway down the hill of life, and to feel that nothing remained of all those noble aims, those fervid desires, for the future of his fellows. Life had slipped away, leaving him only a poor old man, very tired of the struggle—a disappointed old man, who was followed at every crook and turn of the rugged path by a hook-nosed Nemesis—a clog—a drag-weight—a chain which bound him to the earth. Oh! the pity of

it! The pity of it! Ah, well, it was the humour of life, the way of the world. He would laugh ere the tears welled forth—laugh and cry to the world: "Laugh, laugh, laugh, poor insects. Come all ye cheap jesters, all ye poor, tinselled fools in motley, all ye painted clowns and mummers. Tickle each other with the coarseness or delicacy of your humour. Jest with merriest quip and crank—jest though love be dying; jest though the honour of the world be tarnished; jest though battle, murder, and sudden death, famine and fierce want, assail ye; jest on to your fellow insects; jest on, until something catches you by the throat, and death, grimmest jester of all, waits vainly for you to set the table in a roar, whilst you lie with none so poor to do you reverence."

"So," scoffed Mrs. Wayne, "you intend to turn, Professor?"

The Professor came back to everyday life with a start. "Good-bye," he said, and walked aimlessly away.

Something in his manner startled Mrs. Wayne. She watched him walk to the edge of the clearing, and plunge into its sombre depths. How chill and dark they looked! And the sky was blackening. Little eddies of dust whirled upon the gravel path. One by one, every boarder struggled on to the verandah. The young elms by the porch bent like whips, and swayed in all directions. Suddenly, the wind fell. Crick! dash! crack! Summer lightning played upon the panes!

"What is it?" she asked breathlessly, "What's the matter?"

"Only a summer storm," said a boarder, as the lightning ceased, and the flood-gates of heaven were let loose.

Cynthia rushed into the room, her hair loosely flying. "Papa, Papa!" she cried, wildly looking round. "Where is Papa?"

Mrs. Wayne pointed to the sombre woods, with a vague sense of peril. "There!" she said solemnly. "I sent him. Guess I'll have to go after and fetch him back."

Cynthia looked at her mother, as if suddenly inspired, but she said nothing. Then she hurriedly went to her room.

CHAPTER II.

The Professor stumbled blindly forwards into the heart of the bush. His sole desire was to escape civilisation and that Roman nose. For a time his course lay along the bank of one of the streams

which had wrought so much of his woe. The water he had swallowed seemed to magnetise him in the direction of the parent stream. With an effort he tore himself away, making a solemn vow never to touch water again. Onward he toiled over the trunks of dead pines — deceptive, prostrate pillars which crumbled beneath the tread, and nearly broke his legs as he came through to the parent earth, and pungent clouds of dustwood rose rankly to his nostrils. No birds were to be seen; they preferred the outskirts of civilisation to this vast hypæthral temple, the pillars of which hid the faraway sky from his sight. The solitude, the terrible loneliness of the bush appealed to his inmost soul. He was alone with that great Goddess, Nature. Nature didn't thwart and vex him; she held out metaphorical arms to this stunted, venerable child of hers, and welcomed him back with effusion. Her dark, cool cloisters lured him on. He roamed for miles without fatigue, declaiming, as he went, dramatic fragments from "The Choephoræ" of Æschylus to the stately trees. When he couldn't remember anything else to declaim, weary at last and tired, he sat down on a carpet of moss and slept for hours—slept away all remembrance of his cares—slept calmly through the storm, as only those can sleep who rest on Nature's breast.

Something tickled the Professor's nose. He awoke with a start. "Is dinner ready?" he asked, and then looked blankly round.

It was nearly dark. The Professor re-

membered the past. He would not go back to that woman. Death from starvation was preferable; and yet he hungered. How was he to find his way out of the bush? He scratched his head reflectively, and tried to recall Fenimore Cooper's Indians as he gazed through the gathering gloom. They always barked the trees or noticed which way the moss grew, or some stupidity of that sort. If the moss grew one way, the man had to go the other. Was that it? Or if the moss went one way, the man stayed where he was, and the tree—

He gave it up in bewilderment. Had his mind collapsed? Then he felt a giant pine all round. Moss grew on both sides of it. Fenimore Cooper was a fraud, a humbug, who knew nothing about woodcraft. "Bother the trees!" he muttered. "Why don't they read 'Leatherstocking,' or 'The Last of the Mohicans?'"

"In course, mister," piped a shrill treble from the gloom. "You ain't got nuthin' to eat, and you blame the trees. In course."

The Professor jumped high in the air, and held up his hands. "Don't shoot. For mercy's sake, don't shoot," he yelled.



THE PROFESSOR WENT ON.

"You've got the drop on me. I-eh-I believe that's the proper phrase to use on occasions of this sort as a—as a token of submission."

A shrill laugh echoed through the gloom.

"You can help yourself," said the Professor. "Don't you see I can't empty my own pockets if I have to keep my hands up. Be logical. I can't hold my hands up long; they're stiff."

"Then yer kin jest drop 'em, stranger," said the voice. "I guess yer ain't got the hang of these parts."

"No," said the Professor, adapting his language to that of the unknown, "I ain't. Certainly not. I—I wouldn't do it."

"I reckon yer white," said the voice. "What's yer name?"

"Professor Wayne," said the Professor proudly. "A name not altogether unknown in the annals of——"

Again the voice interrupted him. "Guess yer can't wait much longer. Aren't ye darned hungry?"

"Darned—I—ahem—I'm ravenous," said the Professor.



"DO YOU MEAN YOU WOULD HAVE KILLED THE AUTHOR OF YOUR BEING?"

"Don't talk about hanging," implored the Professor, as he dropped his arms, with an air of relief. "My dear sir, do come out of that—pardon the expression—infernal darkness, and show yourself."

"Not much," said the voice. "What d'yer take me for? Good night."

"Stop!" yelled the Professor, in an agony of excitement. "Don't leave me here. I'm lost!" He moved a few steps forward. "Lost!" he repeated bitterly, "and starving."

"Sure it ain't a put up game?" asked the voice cautiously.

"Sure," re-echoed the Professor.

"You'll swear——"

"Anything," said the Professor. "You heard me just now."

There was a low ripple of laughter from behind him. "Reckon I did, mister. You ain't no Sunday school slouch from the Four Corners."

"Well, you kin go on," said the voice, "till yer git to that red pine fifty yards ahead."

The Professor went on. Pine boughs rustled in the gloom. This palpable darkness grew more horrible, blacker, denser every moment. The resinous odour of the pines made him hungrier than before. He stumbled limply forward, with only the snapping of an occasional twig to warn him that he was not alone. The earth was damp and slippery; strange things brushed against his face; some soft-furred animal darted between his legs. Oh-h it was horrible! If he could only see the blessed light of day—only—what was that shining redly through the trees? A fire. Thank heaven!

The Professor stumbled forward into a little clearing with an exclamation of delight, and fell on a log. As he did so, the slight figure of a girl emerged from the

darkness and sat down on the other side of the fire.

The Professor fumbled for his card. We are all creatures of habit. "Permit me to introduce myself," he said, offering it to the girl.

She took it composedly.

"Tain't no use, mister, I can't read."

"Pardon me," said the Professor. "I—apologise—for my—my unpremeditated language just now."

The girl laughed, displaying as she did so two rows of white teeth. She was about eighteen, with a face—at least, all that he could see of it—as copper-coloured as an Indian's, and carried a light rifle in one hand. Stout leather gaiters protected her legs. She held a bundle also. When she came nearer the fire, the Professor discovered that her fair hair was cropped short like a boy's, in much the same way that Cynthia wore hers. He felt reassured. She did not look dangerous. Her short skirt and tightly-fitting jacket were of dark cloth.

"S'posin' we has somethin' to chaw, mister," said the girl, producing a grid-iron, and opening the bundle.

"We kin talk after."

"Delighted," said the Professor. We—eh—idiomatically speaking—will chaw."

The girl took some meat from her bundle, and raked out the glowing wood ashes.

"Thar's a spring way back," she said; "you tuck up yer cuffs, mister, an' git a dipper of water."

The Professor did so, despite his vow never to touch water again. The girl produced two tin plates, and a chunk of corn bread.

When the meat was cooked, she gravely cut it in half, and handed one portion to the Professor.

"Wade in," she said laconically, and the Professor waded.

He never forgot that ambrosial meal. The girl was evidently pleased by his practical appreciation. She watched him, pen-knife in hand, with an amused smile.

"Bein' a sort of a stranger," she said, "an' not knowin' as you was jest a-droppin' in permiskus like, why, I ain't got no forks. If," she added, with naïve

drollery, "if, Professor, you'd let on as I might have expected you, why, I'd a sent for a tablecloth, and slung on more style."

The Professor accepted her apologies in perfect good faith, and assured the girl that his own aim in life was to escape the effeminate luxury of an effete civilisation.

"That bein' so," said the girl, "I reckon it's all right."

"Quite so," said the Professor. "Never enjoyed anything so much in my life."

"It's—it's rather suddin', ain't it?" the girl asked.

"My dear Miss——" the Professor hesitated. "Have you a card?"

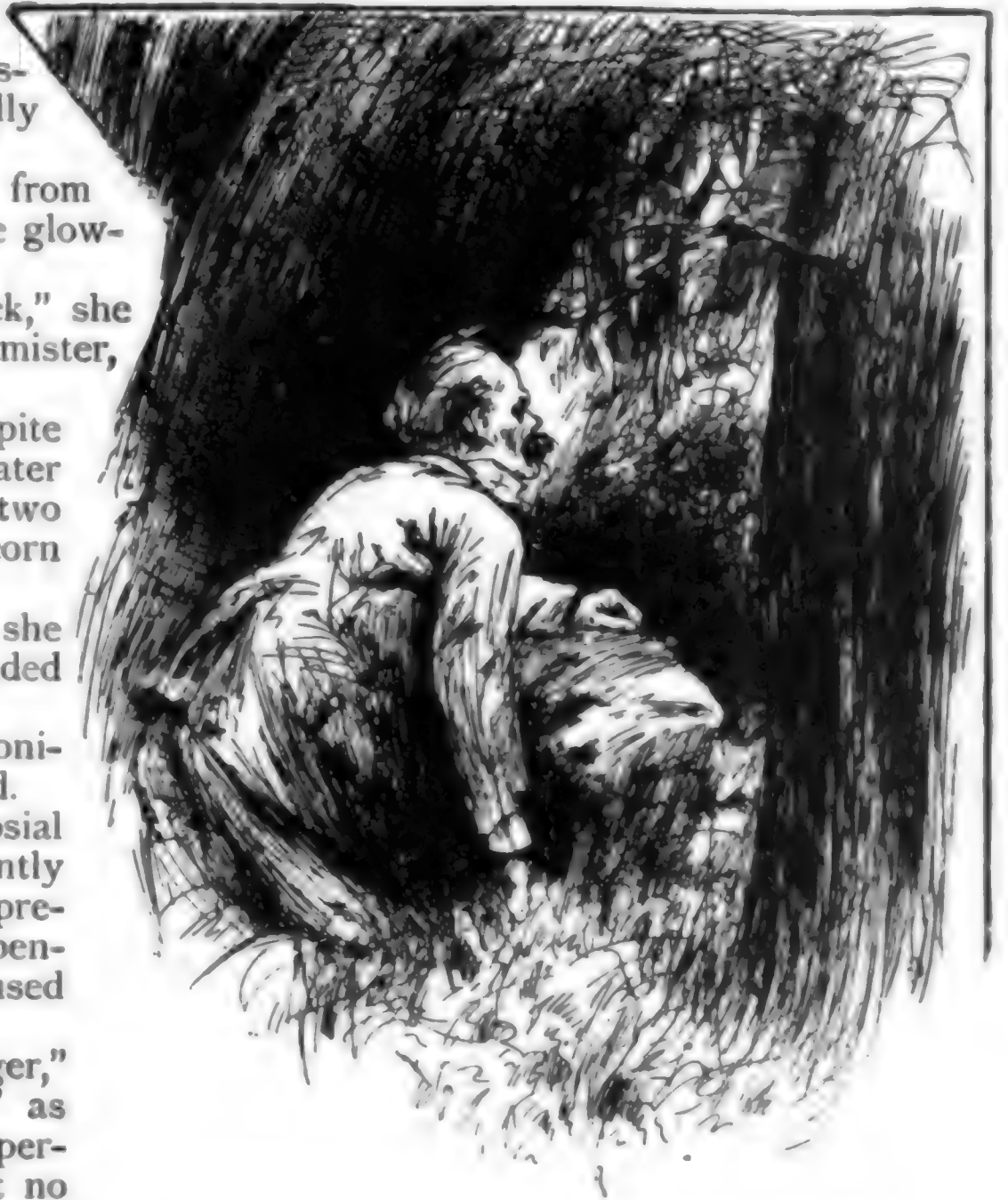
The girl looked gratified. She had evidently never been asked such a question before.

"I reckon I'm called Mirandy, if that's what yer mean."

"My dear Miss Miranda, how can I thank you for your hospitality?"

"Tain't nuthin', Perfessor. You'd a bin asleep now if I hadn't tickled yer nose."

"Yes, I suppose I should."



PROFESSOR WAYNE HALTED, LOOKED, AND RECOILED.

"At first," continued Mirandy, "I thought it was Pap, and I was goin' to draw on yer."

"Pardon me ; you—eh—were going to do what ?"

The girl raised her rifle with a significant gesture.

"Plug yer," she said briefly. "I've runned away."

"Do I—eh—apprehend you to mean that you would have killed the author of your being ?"

Mirandy nodded.

"That's the size of it, mister."

Her cold-blooded ferocity appalled the Professor.

"Oh, of course," he said uneasily. "I daresay it is the custom in these parts. Doubtless he deserved it. I—eh—have no wish to pry into family quarrels, but might I ask the reason ?"

"'Tain't much to quarrel about," said Mirandy listlessly, as she leant forward and looked into the fire. "Dad's goin' to plug Jake 'cause I'm his best girl ; an' I've runned away, an' I'll plug Dad. That's all."

"That's all. I see," said the Professor, "quite so ; nothing could be simpler. A little family dispute which will have to be settled by Homeric methods."

"Guess I'll move out of this in a day or two," said Mirandy. "It's gettin' too crowded."

A sob choked her utterance. She looked very slight and forlorn. Then she proudly brushed away her tears.

"I don't like it at nights," she said. "It's quiet enough in the day. But at night there's all sorts of curious little noises in the trees, an' the winds sorter speak to yer, kinder frighten a body. Now and then a branch snaps or something plumps into the water. It's real lonesome now Jake's cleared out, and Dad not plugged yet. Real lonesome."

The Professor touched her hand gently.

"My poor girl ! Let me try to put things right for you."

"'Taint no use," said the girl. "Yer don't know Dad. He don't allow no liberties to be taken with him. No, sir."

She was busily engaged putting another portion of meat on the fire. "Guess I'll cook this," she said, "for that old woman in the glade over yonder."

"What ?" said the Professor, his hair standing on end. "What ? What sort of a woman ?"

"Well," said Mirandy impartially, "she ain't much to look at."

"Rather a prominent nose ?"

"She's all nose."

The Professor gasped. "It—it must be my wife. She's come after me."

"Guess she's lost too," said Mirandy. "Next thing, Pap 'ill happen along an' there'll be som' shootin'."

The Professor skipped to his feet. He was touched. In a few brief sentences, he hurriedly explained the position of affairs to Mirandy.

"She's downright skeart," said Mirandy reflectively. "Most as skeart as I am o'nights. You just tackle her while she's broke down, an' you'll win."

"I will," said the Professor firmly. "I shall never get such a chance again. Give me the platter. Now for death or victory."

"My !" said Mirandy admiringly, "you're real grit. She's uglier than Pap."

The Professor halted. "She—eh—must be sorry, Mirandy, or she wouldn't have come after me."

"That's so," said Mirandy. "You just sorter rear up on your hind legs and tackle her."

"You'll see me through ?" he asked.

Mirandy nodded, and they set off through the gloom with cat-like steps.

In a few minutes, she halted. "There !" she said. "There ! look at her !"

CHAPTER III.

Professor Wayne looked—and recoiled. The inky darkness of the night had passed away. A weak, watery moon shone down into the glade, and tinged with a grey ashen pallor the trunks of the adjacent trees. In the centre of the clearing, sat a female figure upon a little hill ; and this figure, from time to time, rocked itself despairingly to and fro, and wept copiously after the manner of females who don't quite know where they are. The woman was elderly, with an enormous nose, and tangled grey hair which had escaped from its fastenings and floated out from her shoulders in snaky coils. Her eyes were red and inflamed ; she looked broken, bent, subdued, and utterly crushed : one of her shoes had burst at the point and her toes stuck out. Her costume, battered and torn by the bush, was muddy and disarranged. From time to time she angrily brushed away clouds of mos-

quitoes. The repeated attacks of these irritating insects had all been centred on her nose, which now was truly of Brobdignagian proportions.

The Professor could not restrain an exclamation of pity, as he gazed on this utterly forlorn and woebegone woman. Then she began to speak. Which was unwise.

"Ah-h," she cried, rocking herself to

fully to the surrounding tree-tops. "Here am I," she said, "lost in the bush. I'm tired, hungry, footsore. What's to become of me?"

Nobody answered this very natural enquiry.

"And he was fond of me once. Never cast my nose in my teeth like the others did."

"It would have been a physical impossi-



SHE KNELT AT HIS FEET. "AND WE ONCE LOVED," HE SAID. "LOVED!"

and fro. "Ah-h! It's all my fault. What did I want to aggravate him for?"

The Professor was moved to pity.

"Most likely he's dead by this time, and I'll never get another husband—never."

"That is extremely probable, should any aspiring candidate for the post know as much about you as I do," muttered the Professor angrily. "I—I call it indecent."

"Hush-h-h!" said Mirandy. "Listen to her."

The woman cast up her eyes mourn-

bility," said the Professor, as he contemplated the abnormal size of that more than sufficiently prominent feature.

"Why didn't he bully me?" she wailed. "Why didn't he thrash me as I deserved? Why did he go away and leave me a lonely widow? I know he meant to kill himself"

"Fudge!" said the Professor, "I didn't mean to do anything of the sort."

"And I was so proud of him," sobbed Mrs. Wayne, to the pitiless moon. "So proud of him, though I didn't dare to let

him see it. I never met a man of his size who could use such big words; and he was the only man who ever ventured to take me out sleigh-driving when I was a girl."

"It—it was a bold thing to do," said the Professor, in a pleased whisper.

"And what I'll do without him to worry at, I don't know," deplored Mrs. Wayne, with a fresh outburst. "He was such a lamb."

"Gratifying, very," remarked the Professor.

"I haven't had anything to eat for hours, and I can't get out." She looked round. "Seems to me, I can smell meat somewhere. P'raps it's Indians. I—I don't care. I'll club the lot. P'raps they've eaten him—the poor lamb!"

She lifted a big sapling from the ground, and prepared to set forth on her errand of destruction.

"Noble woman!" said the Professor, his heart swelling with pride. "I'd like to see the Indians who'd stand up against her. She'd clear out the camp."

Mirandy laughed silently, as the Professor advanced towards his wife, plate in hand.

"Sophronisba," he said majestically, "I bring you food."

Sophronisba screamed, and let fall her club. "It's you, is it?" she said ungraciously. "Put it down. I thought you'd be somewhere about here."

The Professor reflected that she was only dissembling her joy with an outward show of indifference. "Yes," he said, "it is I," and put the plate by her side.

For some minutes the Professor affected to be scrutinising the surrounding scenery. When he again faced his wife, the platter was empty. "Help me up," she said sternly. "I'm going home. I've had enough of this foolishness."

The Professor did not stir. "Good-night," he said coldly.

Mrs. Wayne sat down on the ground with startling suddenness.

"I give in," she said.

The Professor again assisted her to rise.

"Pardon me if I don't quite understand you. We had a little difference of opinion this morning. I think we may take it as arranged. If not——"

"If not?"

"Here you stop," and he moved towards the shadowy trees.

Mrs. Wayne's heart quailed. She could

stand death, but she was afraid of ghosts. The spirits of dead trees had haunted her for hours past.

"You misunderstood me," she said. "I—I came after you to explain."

"And Fraser goes back to town to-morrow?"

"Ye-es," very reluctantly.

The Professor turned upon her fiercely.

"Woman," he said, "I will not extort anything from your fears. Years ago I loved you—years ago; and now, we, husband and wife, have trodden different ways, sundered, drifted apart, quarelling, and bickering, and hiding our chains out of sight. God knows it has not been my fault. Have I ever denied you anything? Have I ever doubted or mistrusted you? And now—and now," his voice rang out in bitter scorn and anguish, "you want to sell our daughter to that hoary old millionaire, and blight her young life as you have blighted mine."

She knelt at his feet. He put his hands before him with a gesture of abhorrence, as if to shut her out from his sight.

"And we once loved," he said. "Loved! Can you imagine it? I was to become famous, you were to help me. We were to go through life hand in hand. Have we done so?"

She made no answer. Only crouched still lower at his feet, as if to hide her face from his sad, accusing eyes.

"Why should I appeal to you?" he said, "why? Come, we will go back to the old slavery, the old quarrels, the old bitterness, till death do us part. Break Cynthia's heart, break mine. It doesn't matter. You have already ruined our lives. Come!"

But Mrs. Wayne, weeping, clung to his knees and begged for pardon. She humbled her pride in the dust, and there in the shadows cast by the pines, with the moonlight streaming down upon them; there, amid the hush of the dewy night, husband and wife came together again. Torn, dusty, dishevelled, disfigured, they were indeed unsightly; but there was that within their hearts which banished all thoughts of mundane things. Gone for ever the tyranny of the past; vanished all doubt, suspicion, distrust. Great Mother Nature had taken them to her heart and healed them with her magic touch. The Professor opened his arms, and Mrs. Wayne sank wearily upon his shoulder. Then she came back to everyday life.

"How are we going to get out of this?" she asked, in her customary keen tones.

"Follow me," replied the Professor; and she followed meekly, as befitteth one who recognises the superiority of her lord and master.

Mirandy led them what appeared to be many weary miles before they reached the spot where the Professor had started in the morning. Then she disappeared, and the Professor and his wife sneaked up to their rooms without attracting observation.

When the Professor came down stairs again, his first impulse was to find Cynthia and tell her all about the day's adventures.

He discovered her watching for him on the verandah. Cynthia did not appear to be at all anxious, but looked charmingly cool and composed.

"Sit down, papa," she said, as she rocked idly to and fro.

The Professor was hurt.

"Aren't you just a little bit unfeeling, Cynthia?" he enquired. "We might have been murdered, and yet you sit there with a book in your lap, as cool as a cucumber."

Cynthia laughed.

"Reckon you ain't no Sunday school slouch from the Four Corners," was all she said.

The Professor staggered back against the house.

"Miranda!" he cried.

"Yes, dad," answered Cynthia demurely. "I wasn't going to let you old people lose yourselves, so I dressed up and came after you."

"You!" said the Professor, "you!"

"Yes, dad. The bush is only five miles across, and you and ma have been going in a circle for hours. I knew every inch of it. It's done mother good. Dad, if you ever betray me, I'll——"

"What?" asked the Professor.

"Plug yer," said Cynthia. Then she flung her arms round the Professor's neck and kissed him softly.

"Is—it all right now, dad?" she asked.

"Yes," said the Professor, "Henceforth I mean to assert——"

"Pro-fess-cr-r!" called a well-known voice. "Come in to supper!" And they went in.



"PRO-FESS-OR-R, COME IN TO SUPPER!"



IN farther Besarabia rejoicing ruled. Princess Shehezerade had ascended the throne and given the people a constitution.

Not desiring that constitution spoiled, as it might be if Shehezerade became a sour old maid, the Besarabians availed themselves of the right of public meeting, and respectfully petitioned their gracious and beautiful sovereign to take unto herself a husband.

"I bow to the wishes of my beloved people," she responded. "Trot out your husbands."

But here a great difficulty arose. The women who cordially hated their husbands and would gladly be rid of them, would not consent to giving them up if thereby they might become the rulers of the land. Give them up they would, to the Lord High Executioner, but not to be King-Consort—well, hardly.

And the women who loved their husbands, loved them with a selfish love, and would not give them up either.

So the Royal counsellors diplomatically put it to Her Majesty that she would please her beloved people by taking a spouse not yet encumbered by the matrimonial state.

"The Queen wills it then," quoth Shehezerade, "select me a husband."

And the grave counsellors searched far and wide for a youth worthy of a place on the throne beside Shehezerade. Finally they selected Abdul Jympsnwead, a doughty young soldier, whose bravery had already won him a general's epaulettes, or whatever the Besarabians may wear when so distinguished. The Royal Khasné (treasury) provided funds for a sumptuous wedding, which lasted a whole week. But when the nation was sober again, it learned that Abdul Jympsnwead I. had died before he was thrice twenty-four hours a king.

"How did it happen?" asked the people in tears. They might have asked in words or signs, but the dread fact remained.

The Lord High Executioner explained that, according to custom, Their Majesties had retired to the Nuptial Palace. From the private apartments first came sounds of billing and cooing, then silence exhaled as thick as a fog. "But what would you?" he asked, shrugging his shoulders, in French. "Her Majesty is a woman, and with women even the thickest silence cannot last long."

Soon her voice was heard again, in gradually *crescendo* tones, which culminated in her tearing open the door and calling in the Lord High Executioner.

On the carpet knelt Abdul Jympsnwead.
 "Chop 'off the caitiff's head!" commanded Shehezerade.

"Your Majesty——" expostulated the Lord High Executioner.

Abdul Jympsnwead bowed his head far forward, to make the job an easy one. And so it proved.

What had he done to offend Her Gracious Majesty? No one dared ask.

The Lord High Executioner was a married man and did not ask, for he had seen how willing Abdul Jympsnwead had been to die.

After a proper course of mourning, the nation again clamoured for a king.

"Well," said Shehezerade, "Barkis is—I mean, I bow to the will of my beloved subjects."

Again the Great Council of Wise Men was convened in a sort of Landtag, or Parliament, or Congress, and candidates were discussed. This time the choice fell upon Ahmed Bey. It is not worth while to give his pedigree, for within a week of the nuptials he shared the fate of his predecessor.

"Business is flourishing," said the Lord High Executioner; "but young men will grow scarce if this keeps on."

And keep on it did. Why weary you with a list of the names of those whose blood was absorbed by the rapacious carpet?

The Great Council now was almost in continuous session. It kept emissaries at all the courts of the world, enlisting brave young men, who were sent in ship-loads to meet the exigencies of the circumstances. But the slaughter of husbands went on.

Finally the Great Council learned of a magician called Kerpheeps, residing at the Golden Horn.

"Is there a remedy for consecutive retail polyandry?" they cabled him.

"Allah is Allah," he responded, "I will proceed thither and see the case." (11 words collect).

The Besarabians sent their war-ship *Takimi Vekai* to fetch the wise magician Kerpheeps. With much pomp and circumstance he was received and conducted before the Great Council.

When they saw his coal-black fiery eyes, his beard and hair the colour of a raven's wing, his upright figure, they could not but marvel.

"Aye, my lords, it is true I am Kerpheeps," he responded to their query, shaking the gold-embroidered silken gown.



"JYMPSNWEAD BOWED HIS HEAD TO MAKE THE JOB AN EASY ONE. AND SO IT PROVED."

that covered his stalwart form. "It is also true that more than seven centuries have passed over my head, and it is likewise true that no woman has ever talked back to me."

"Oh, sapient and ponderous Kerpheeps!" the members of the Council exclaimed, as they prostrated themselves before him.

"Well," he asked, after they had soiled their foreheads on the ground, "as we say in England, wot's the di-few-gulty?"

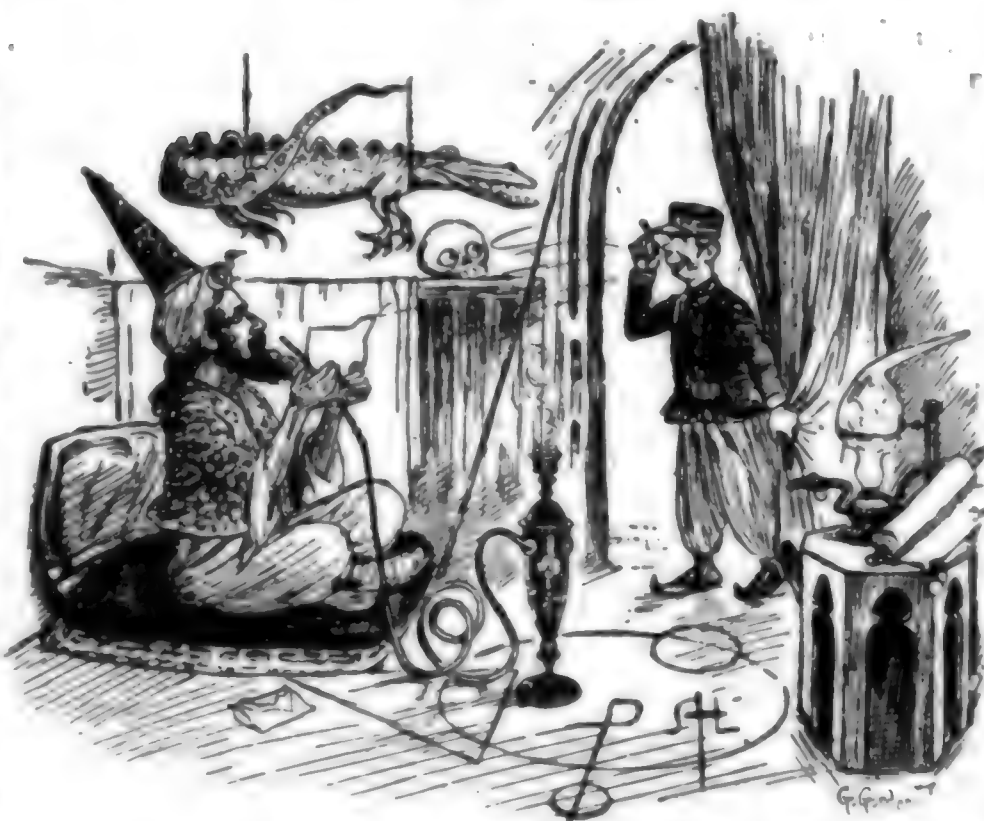
They then told him. "H'm—h'm," he mused in Turkish. Then he evolved from his inner consciousness the conviction that was destined to save Besarabia. How this was to be will shortly be made manifest.

"I would see the fair Shehezerade," he said.

Her Majesty communicated with, at once favoured the Council with her presence.

"Fair Queen," said Kerpheeps, "raise thy veil, that I may behold thee."

"Who dares——" she began.



"I WILL PROCEED THITHER AND SEE THE CASE."

"Hoist that veil!" Kerpheeps thundered, in tones which shook the very rafters.

Shehezerade obeyed. "By the leaping great Llama of Peru," said Kerpheeps, "she is a beauty. Thanks, your Majesty; pray drop the veil; so much loveliness is too dazzling." And he shielded his eyes with his hand.

When the Queen had withdrawn from the Council Chamber, Kerpheeps announced:

"The remedy is found. I am the remedy."

"You?" asked the members of the Council, just as the well-trained chorus of an opera might.

"Yes, I. I will marry her."

"Long live Kerpheeps the First!" shouted the Council, and the people took up the cry of delight, not knowing what it was about.

The nuptials were performed as usual, and as usual the Lord High Executioner took his station at the palace, after Shehezerade and Kerpheeps had withdrawn to the privacy of their rooms.

Once within them, Kerpheeps removed his turban and his gabardine, and then spoke to his expectant bride:

"Shezzy," he said, "don't be afraid of me."

"I'll not," she smiled, closing her little fists and showing her white teeth. "On the contrary, I'll make you fatigued of your existence. You will learn how uneasy is the head that wears a crown."

"Not so, fair sweetheart. But why dally with words? You may as well at once understand the tradition that has kept me young and vigorous for over seven centuries. Whenever I approach anger I utter my name, and then something



G Gordon Fraser.

"HOIST THAT VEIL," KERPHEEPS THUNDERED.

is sure to give way. It is not I. Dost understand, my Shezzy?"

"You black-bearded, loud-mouthed, antiquated son of a Turk!" she began.

"Kerpheeps!" he at once roared. She fell on her knees before him.

"Kerpheeps!" he repeated, and then she touched the ground with her hands too.

"Oh, Kerpheeps," she sighed, "be gentle."

"Kerpheeps!" he roared again, and receded from her.

"Dear Kerpheeps," she pleaded, following on her hands and knees.

"Kerpheeps!" he shouted anew, and his footsteps described a small circle. She followed him in fear and trembling.

"Darling Kerpheeps," she moaned, as tears streamed from her eyes.

"Kerpheeps! Kerpheeps!" he yelled, increasing the diameter of the circle each time he uttered his name.

"Oh, Kerpheeps," she now almost whined; but within her she gloried that she had at last found her master.

The Lord High Executioner hearing the voices, broke open the door and rushed in, his gleaming scimitar on high.

"Shall I clip his head off, your Majesty?" asked the Lord High Executioner.

At once she arose, in her full queenly dignity:

"No, you blathering imbecile," or words to that effect, she said, "send for the Royal Architect and have him widen the walls of our nuptial palace, that Kerpheeps may extend his promenade."

Then she dropped again on her hands and knees, and whispered coily:—

"Is it not even so thy wish, my master, Kerpheeps?"

But all this happened in farther Bessarabia.



"IS IT NOT EVEN SO THY WISH, MY MASTER, KERPHEEPS?"

OUR COMPANY

In the Provinces

Philip May.



My first experience of theatrical life was in 'King Henry VIII.' I was between nine and ten years of age, and occupied a not very

exalted position in the lower first form of one of our public schools, when a prefect of the upper sixth, who was to play Queen Katharine, selected me as one of his—or her—attendants. How proud I was when the drawing and singing master, who was also stage manager, passed me as suitable for the position! And how I longed for a speaking part during the rehearsals, and for no part at all when the night of the performance came!

Still, if I did not achieve any great success, everything passed off satisfactorily, and naturally I was as much elated as those who had been more successful because they had been granted greater opportunities for gaining distinction. Puffed up with pride, I came to the conclusion that nature had intended

me for an actor; and I felt, too, that as Shakespeare had gained distinction as a playwright, I could certainly acquire fame as a dramatist.

My first five act tragedy was written in verse; and this, I boasted, was superior to that of the Bard of Avon, because of my rhymes. In the matter of plot, too, I deemed myself his superior; for I killed off more of my characters, and took much less time about it, than Shakespeare.

Modesty was not a weakness of mine as a boy, I fancy. Certainly, I felt sure of success, when my tragedy was about to be performed upon a card-



"OUT, I SAY."

board stage, with actors and actresses, who owed their existence to my dexterity with scissors and paint, and who never "gagged" without the consent of the author. The first performance attracted a large audience, as the author had the prestige of having recently taken part in the school theatricals, and the owner of the theatre, the son of an eminent historian, was an adept at the art of puff, and always produced plays upon the half profit system.

Nibs, marbles, and other schoolboy commodities, were freely given for seats to witness the performance, which took place in the lower school during the half-hour between preparation and evening prayers. As the manuscript has now been lost for about a quarter of a century, I cannot say whether my first dramatic effort deserved to succeed; though I am forced to admit that it was received with howls of derision.

It was not then the custom for the author to come before the curtain and argue with the audience on a first night; and in doing this, I admit that I may have set a pernicious example. I did not have the argument all to myself, I regret to say; there were two sides to the question, and as there were some fifty or more voices upon the other side, I had but a poor chance of gaining a hearing. What I did get was a hiding.

A big fellow, who ought to have been in the upper school, proceeded from words to blows; and I, reckless after my recent failure, struck him again. Then, a fight was arranged for the next morning, and I went to bed, after prayers, to dream of the part of "Jack the Giant-killer." In dream-

land, I was both brave and victorious; but when the ring was being formed by the prefect of the week, I behaved and felt much as I should have done if playing the part of a convict ordered out for execution. Only then I should not have had to suffer so long through lack of courage to own myself beaten. When it was all over,

I was too weak even to say, "For this relief many thanks."

About two years after this too striking episode, I was removed to a private school in consequence of illness; and again I was "a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage."

Still, I was always cast for female parts, though it was my ambition to play Hamlet; and I was unable to make any use of my knowledge of this play until I went to Germany, where I assisted my tutor, Herr von Scholler, in his translation of Shakespeare.

When I arrived home from the Fatherland of sauerkraut and blood sausage, I found that my parents had gone abroad, intending to meet me at Brussels; but I had left my German college before their letter, apprising me of the fact, had reached Berlin. Here was an opportunity upon which I was not slow to seize.

Fame and Mr. Irving Fortescue, who was advertising in the *Daily Mercury* that he was in want of amateur and professional actors for a tour in

the provinces, seemed to summon me; and I answered the summons, climbed up a dark flight of stairs to the second floor back of a dirty, narrow-fronted house near Drury Lane Theatre, and knocked. Fame, alias Irving Fortescue, said come in; and I entered, and blew my own trumpet.

Apparently the note I struck was the



MR. WILLARD DRAWL



MR. GARRICK JAMES FOUND THAT THERE WAS NO WIG LARGE ENOUGH FOR HIS HEAD.

right one, for when I had told Irving Fortescue my qualifications, he told me I was the very man he wanted. He praised my face, form, and figure, in spite of my feeble protests and fainter blushes. Then he remarked that his fee was three guineas, and that directly I had paid this he would give me an introduction to Mr. Willard Drawl, the eminent actor, who was to open that very night at Slushington on the Mudway, and only wanted myself to complete his excellent and most popular company. I remember I thought it rather strange that Mr. Wright should be charged three guineas for turning up at the right

moment; but then I was only sixteen, and I paid.

How slowly the train seemed to crawl along that was to bear me to the Mudway, where I hoped to find that tide, "which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." But good things and bad, the quick and the slow, all have their endings; and even the Smashem and Turnover line lands its passengers somewhere or other sooner or later, especially later, as I was when I alighted on the platform at Slushington.

I hastened to the theatre and to Mr. Willard Drawl. The former was not a striking edifice, but the actor was indeed a man of parts. These he sold to the highest bidders; and I was engaged to play Hamlet for one night only for a premium of three guineas, and for general utility for such further term as I liked for two guineas extra.

On the first night at Slushington, our company played "She Stoops to Conquer," and I took the part of Diggory, and, with the assistance of a scene-shifter, represented the several shabby fellows with punch and tobacco in the Alehouse scene.

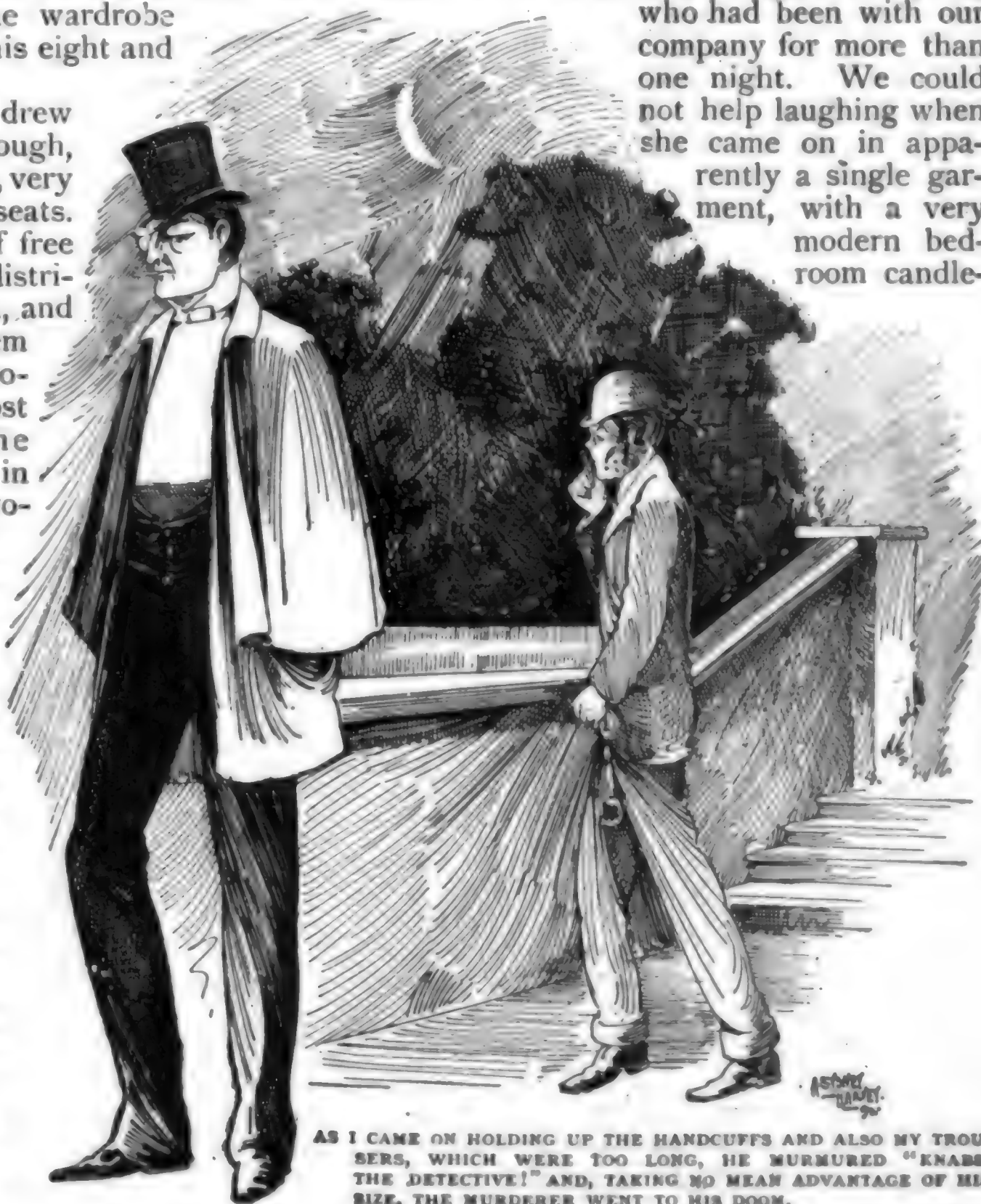
The use of wigs and costumes was not included in the terms arranged with Mr. Willard Drawl; and Mr. Solomon Isaacs, the costumier and wardrobe keeper of our company, let out, at the best price he could obtain, such theatrical properties as he had himself picked up at a bargain one Sunday morning in Petticoat Lane. My garments were all right for first and third seedy fellow, which parts I doubled, whilst the scene-shifter took second and fourth; but Mr. Garrick James, the eminent amateur who appeared for one night only as Mr. Hardcastle, actually made use of swear words to Mr. Solomon Isaacs in the dressing room, when he found that there was no wig in the wardrobe large enough for his eight and a quarter head.

Our company drew large audiences, though, of those who came, very few paid for their seats. A large number of free passes had been distributed in the town, and those who used them had to buy a programme, which cost a shilling in the stalls, sixpence in the dress circle, twopence in the pit, and a penny in the gallery. On Saturday night, however, when a melodrama was performed, no passes to the pit and gallery were given away, and we had quite a large and enthusiastic audience, who had paid a shilling for admission to the pit, and sixpence for the gallery.

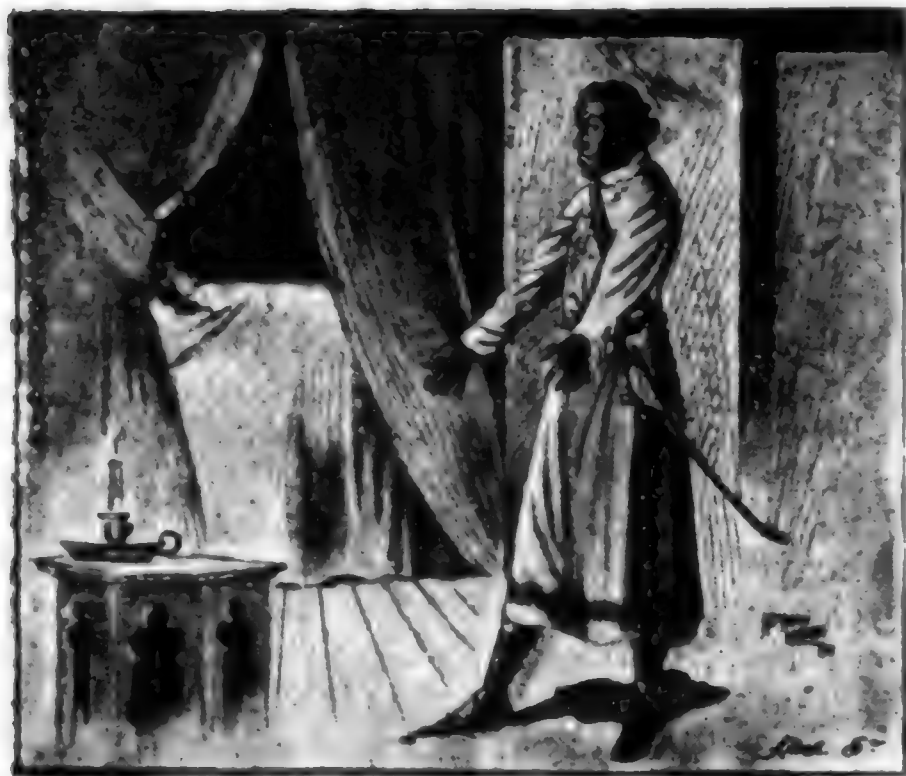
Mr. Willard Drawl played the villain in a style

not altogether unworthy of the Adelphi; for his smile was at once childlike and bland, he wore his eyeglass and smoked his cigarette after the approved manner of Adelphic murderers, and when I came on holding up the handcuffs in what he had told me was the orthodox professional way, and holding up my trousers, which overmuch resembled two French seaports in being too long and too loose, he murmured "Knabs, the detective!" in such a masterly manner, and—taking no mean advantage of his greater size and heavier weight—went to his doom with a cigarette and such a devil-me-care sort of look, that the audience were almost equally divided between those who applauded and those who hissed.

Macbeth was in the programme for Monday; and Miss Blanche Siddons Yorke, who played Lady Macbeth, very much amused such old stagers as myself, who had been with our company for more than one night. We could not help laughing when she came on in apparently a single garment, with a very modern bedroom candle-



AS I CAME ON HOLDING UP THE HANDCUFFS AND ALSO MY TROUSERS, WHICH WERE TOO LONG, HE MURMURED "KNABS, THE DETECTIVE!" AND, TAKING NO MEAN ADVANTAGE OF HIS SIZE, THE MURDERER WENT TO HIS DOOM.



MR. D'OILY BLACK AS OTHELLO.

stick, which she addressed as she said in a tone of voice very suitable for ordering chops and tomato sauce, "Out, damned spot! out, I say!" and then added in rather a pugilistic style, "One, two."

Mr. D'Oily Black, as Othello, the next night, looked for all the world like a cross between a minstrel of Margate sands and a chief of Zululand; and Miss Siddons Yorke, who had only joined our company the night before, and was playing Desdemona upon this occasion, said she would never have paid sixpence for her part, if she had known she was to be doomed to play with such a stick.

How heartily I laughed at others, never dreaming how terrible a fate was in store for myself. Dame Fortune smiled, and her daughter of ill omen seemed afar off. I was certain of a good house for my performance of Hamlet, for a local belle had agreed to play Ophelia, who was daughter not only to Polonius but also to mine host of the Bull's Arms. She was very popular in the neighbourhood, and even included the leading journalists of the town in the list of her acquaintances; and she did not pay for her part, but took tickets and sold them to her numerous admirers, for the benefit of the manager.

Just before the performance, I discovered that the old clothes of the Prince of Denmark, as supplied by Mr. Solomon Isaacs, did not fit my person,

and it was necessary for Hamlet to be padded to fit the costume; but I was more fortunate than Ophelia, whose size rendered it necessary that she should become a contracted as well as a contracting party.

"The play, I remember, pleased not the million," or I should perhaps say the hundred, who happened to be present. Ophelia's friends did their best to make the play go; and Hebe, who I regret to say was too prone to levity to succeed as a serious actress, conceived the idea, between the second and third acts, of turning the whole thing into burlesque. Of course, I did not consent, though the others jumped at the idea; and when mad Ophelia sang a comic song and danced something between an Irish jig and a minuet, I shook the dust of the boards off my feet, and finally terminated my neither long nor successful career with our company in the provinces.



"THE PLAY, I REMEMBER, PLEASED NOT THE MILLION."

The Dance of the Flowers.

BY HENRY SIEBERT.

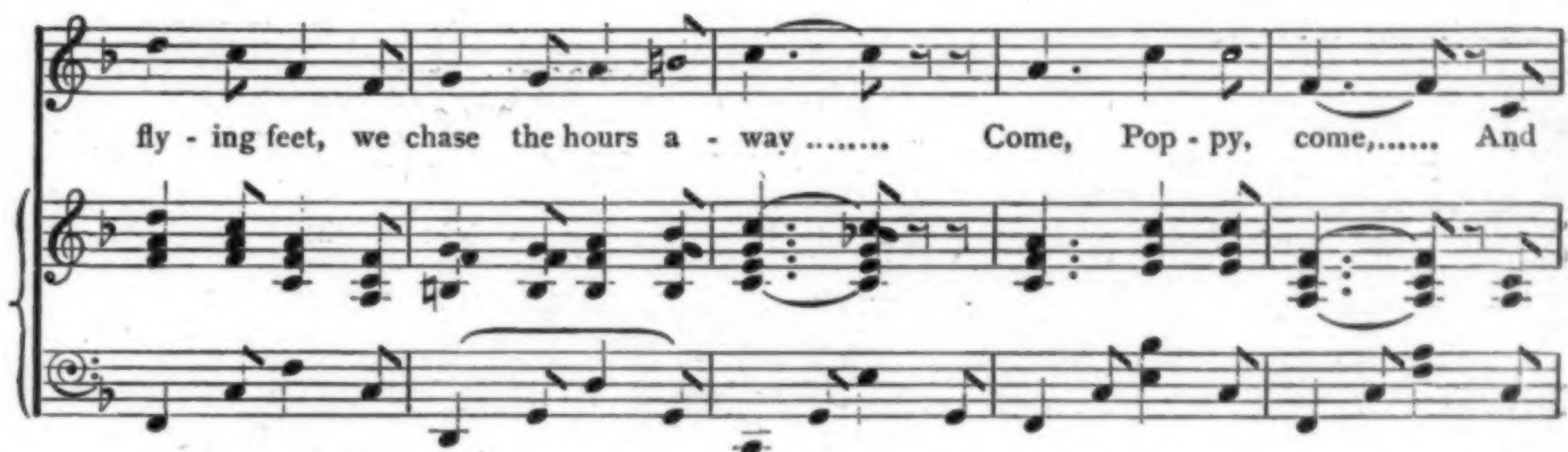
PIANO.

The piano introduction consists of two staves in 6/8 time. The right hand features a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

Come, Pop - py, come,... And join our round - e - lay,..... To mu - sic sweet, with

The first system of the song features a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves. The vocal melody is simple and melodic, with lyrics written below the notes. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern.

fly - ing feet, we chase the hours a - way Come, Pop - py, come,..... And

The second system continues the vocal and piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes a long note with a dotted line, indicating a sustained sound. The piano accompaniment remains consistent in its rhythmic accompaniment.

join our round - e - lay,..... To mu - sic sweet, with fly - ing feet, we

The third system concludes the visible portion of the music. It features the same vocal and piano accompaniment structure, with the vocal line ending on a final note and the piano accompaniment providing a concluding rhythmic flourish.

dance the hours a - way..... We

cres.

all are hap - py flow'rs, And love the sun - shine bright; We

8ves.

dance thro' sun - lit hours, But don our buds at night. We

all are hap - py flow'rs, And love the day - light bright, We

dance thro' sun - lit hours, But close our buds at night.....

8ves.

THE DANCE OF THE FLOWERS.

63

Andante.

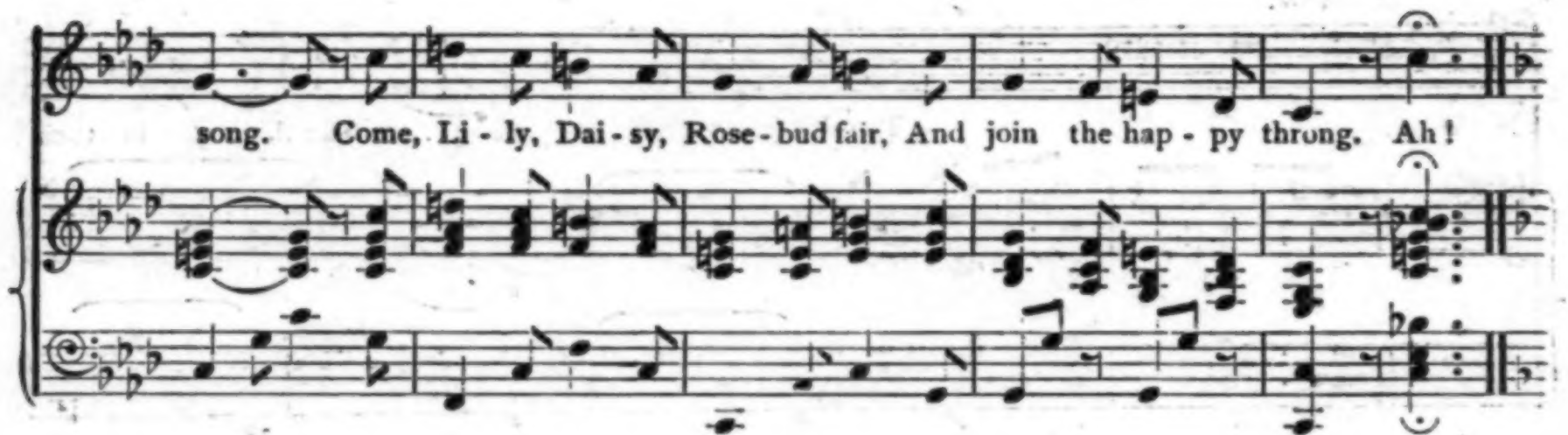
The flow'rs are gone . to sleep,... The birds are in their

nest,..... The star be - gin to peep..... All na - ture is at rest ;..... The

birds are in their nest,..... The flow'rs are gone to sleep,..... But soon a - gain comes

day,..... And soft the sun - light gleams, The birds be - gin their lay,..... The

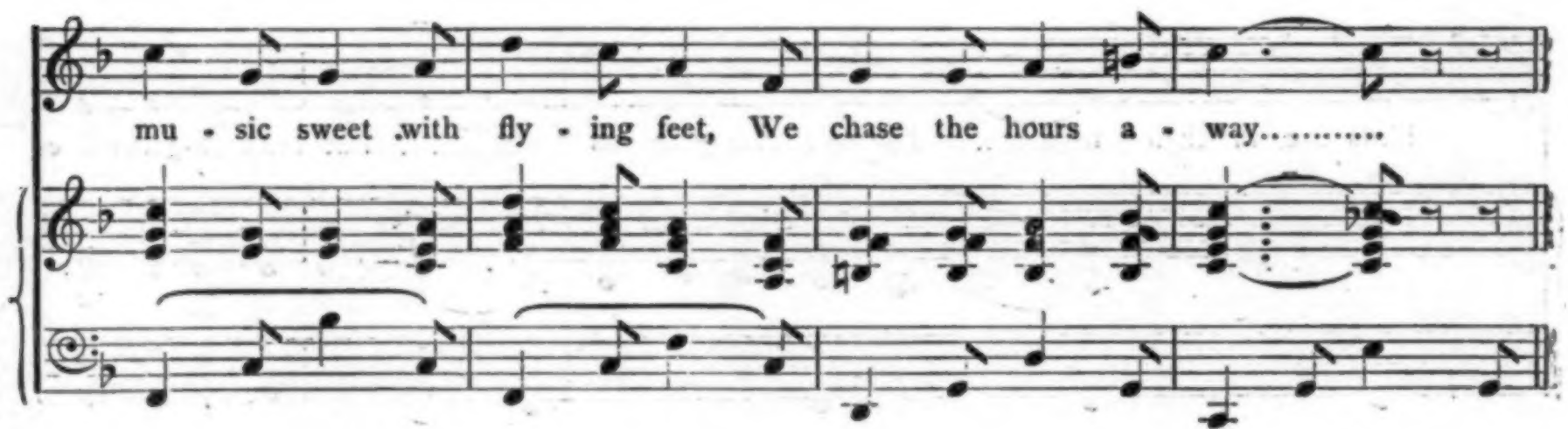
flow'rs a - wake from dreams, The sigh - ing sum - mer wind, Just hums a mer - ry



song. Come, Li - ly, Dai - sy, Rose - bud fair, And join the hap - py throng. Ah!



Come, Pop - py, come,..... And join our round - e - lay,..... To

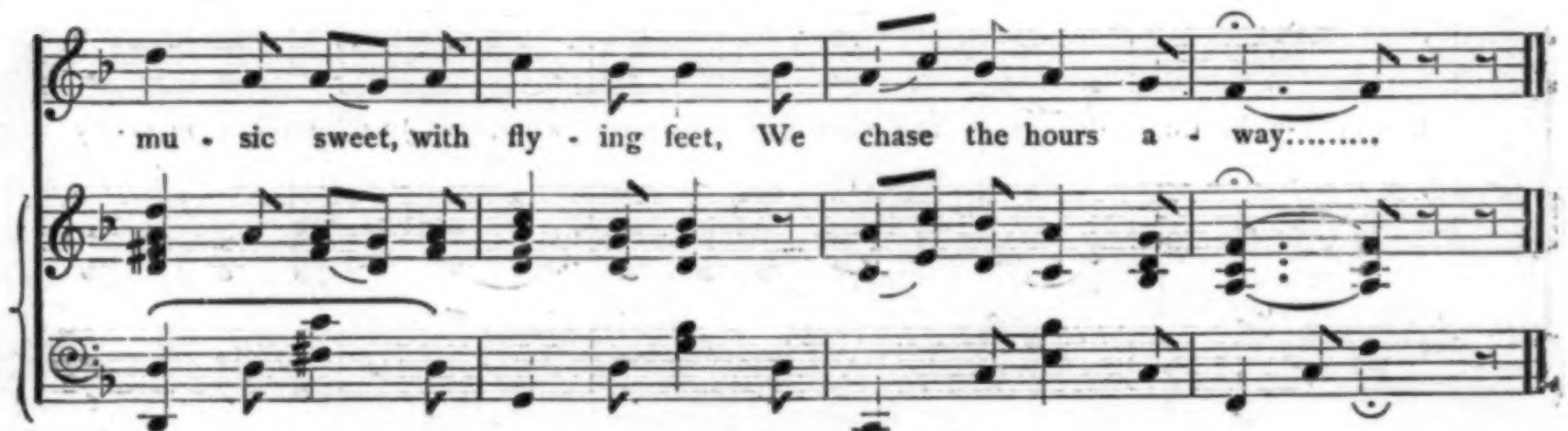


mu - sic sweet with fly - ing feet, We chase the hours a - way.....

CHORUS.



Come, Pop - py, come,..... And join our round - e - lay,.....



mu - sic sweet, with fly - ing feet, We chase the hours a - way.....